# 2025 NFL PREVIEW

# Athlon Sports

## 4TH-AND-GO!

AGGRESSION REPLACES CAUTION ON 4TH DOWN

THE NFL'S

## GREAT RB RENAISSANCE

## FOLLOW THE LEADER

6 TRENDS THAT ARE TAKING HOLD

CHIEFS QB
**PATRICK MAHOMES**

BILLS QB
**JOSH ALLEN**

EAGLES RB
**SAQUON BARKLEY**

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# EDITOR'S LETTER

For football fans of a certain vintage (in other words, old guys like me), great NFL running backs were once the object of devotion, even worship. Backyard football games featured us kids attempting to replicate the moves of our idols — Walter Payton's loaf-of-bread ball-carrying style, Marcus Allen's uncanny ability to find seams, Tony Dorsett's open-field agility.

To this day, my favorite football player of all time remains Earl Campbell. To me, the Tyler Rose was the perfect running back — the rarest combination of power, speed and bull-headed determination. Do yourself a favor and go down a Campbell rabbit hole on YouTube. One play, he's beating a speedy defensive end to the corner and taking it to the house; the next, he's seeking out contact head-first and pancaking a middle linebacker or having the jersey ripped from his back as he struggles for extra yardage.

For me, those were the glory days. Of course, I grew up in a time when crusty old coaches were apt to say silly things like, "When you pass, three things can happen, and two of them are bad."

As the game advanced, the running back receded in importance. Establishing the run has remained an integral component of winning football, but somewhere along the way, the running back position lost its luster.

Passing games have increased in sophistication and efficiency, propelling the wide receiver past the running back on the offensive food chain. Feeding your star wideout and creating chunk plays is far more important than giving your running back several carries to establish a rhythm.

Realizing that the position had to adapt or continue to wither, coaches and running backs changed the paradigm. By becoming effective pass-game targets, RBs like Marshall Faulk and LaDainian Tomlinson became lethal three-down weapons and took their place at the vanguard of a running back revolution.

Today, the comeback of the running back position is reaching a zenith. Future Hall of Famer Derrick Henry continues to shed and outrun tacklers 10 years younger than he is. Saquon Barkley just had a historically productive season. Bijan Robinson is a dual-threat weapon in an ascending offense. When his health permits, Christian McCaffrey remains the gold standard for three-down production. Ashton Jeanty is poised to join the elite from the moment he steps on the field as a rookie this fall.

In his story "RB Renaissance" in this year's edition of *Athlon Sports Pro Football,* senior editor Kyle Wood explores the re-emergence of the running back as an important offensive weapon and marquee NFL attraction. Teams are realizing what they can accomplish if they find a McCaffrey or a Barkley of their own. After all, the NFL is something of a copycat league, and when something works, everyone wants to try it.

The sport is constantly evolving, and fortunately, Athlon has a staff of knowledgeable and insightful experts who stay on top of every trend. Their work is reflected in the pages that follow. We hope you enjoy this year's magazine.

Rob Doster

**ROB DOSTER, MANAGING EDITOR**

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# LEAPING INTO HISTORY

In a season that culminated with a Super Bowl win, the Philadelphia Eagles' most memorable highlight of 2024 came in a run-of-the-mill Week 9 contest against Jacksonville.

In the midst of an All-Pro campaign that would produce a league-leading 2,005 rushing yards, Eagles running back Saquon Barkley provided the most dazzling play (and photo sequence) of the year with his improbable, acrobatic reverse hurdle over Jaguars defender Jarrian Jones.

And by the way, in case you didn't see it, Barkley absolutely stuck the landing.

**PHOTO BY ELSA/GETTY IMAGES**

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## ALL THINGS FOOTBALL — COLLEGE AND PRO

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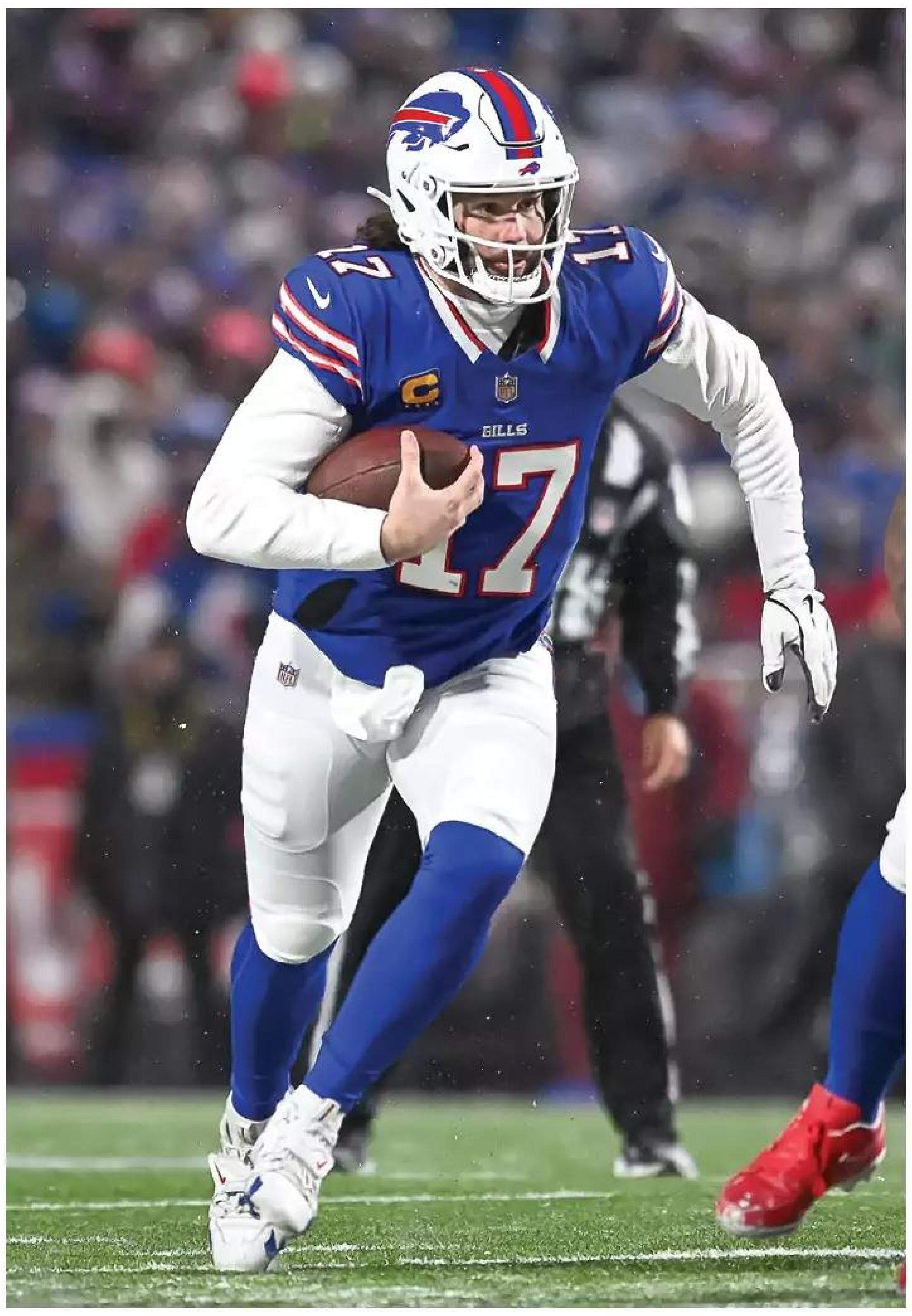

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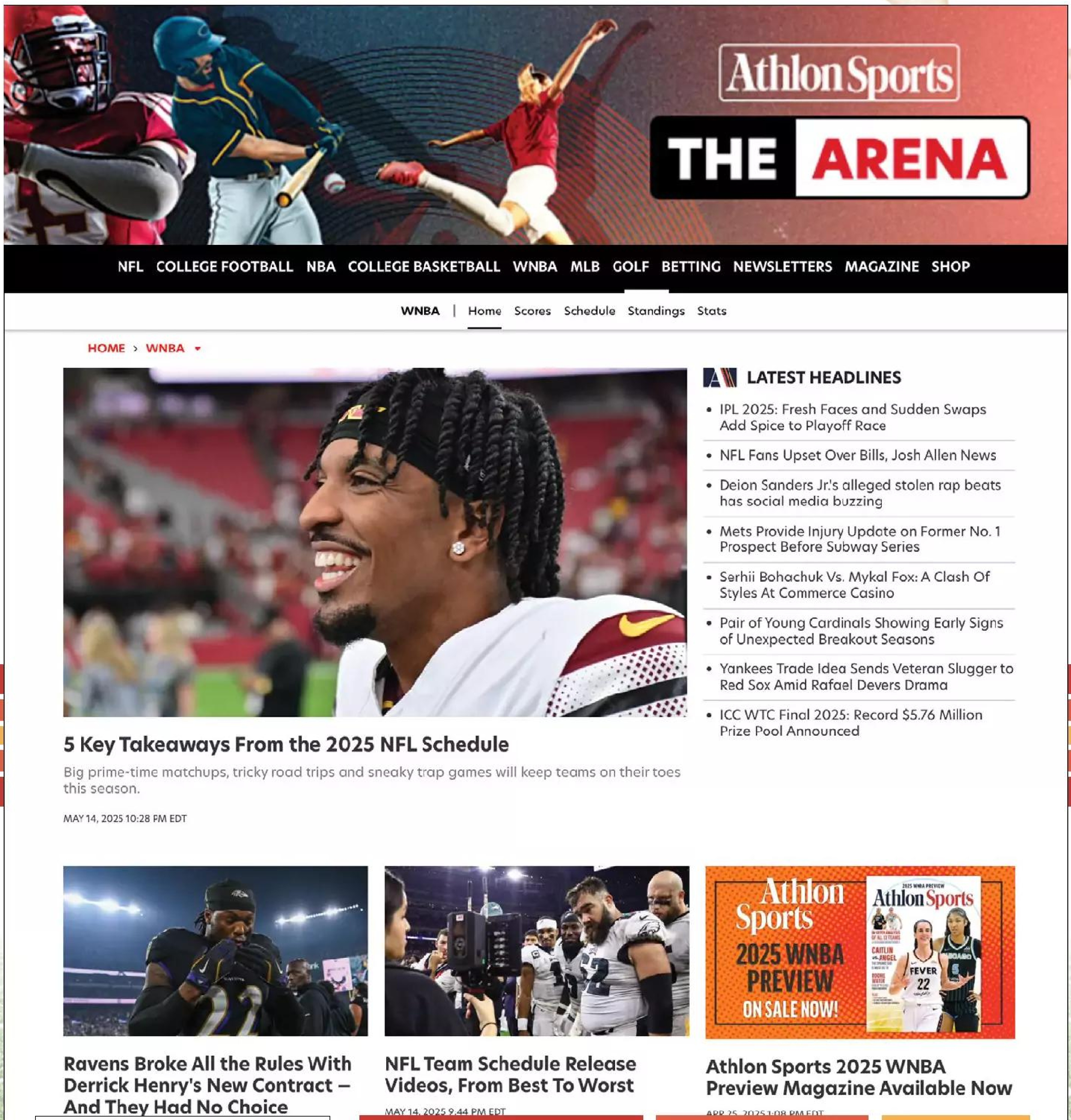
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# 15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2025

BY LUKE EASTERLING

JAMES LANG-IMAGN IMAGES

## 1 CAN THE EAGLES REPEAT?

After coming up just short of the ultimate prize at the hands of the Chiefs two years prior, the Eagles finished the job this time around with a dominant revenge win in Super Bowl LIX. Now the question becomes: Can they follow in Kansas City's footsteps and get to the top of the mountain again this season?

They'll have to overcome the exodus of multiple key players on defense, as end Josh Sweat, tackle Milton Williams and cornerback Darius Slay Jr. all left in free agency, and safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson was traded to the Texans. Philly will miss the leadership of end Brandon Graham following his retirement after a memorable 15-year career with the Eagles.

The offense returns intact, though, with many of the most important pieces still firmly planted in the prime of their respective careers. With arguably the league's best offensive line, a versatile playmaker at quarterback in Jalen Hurts coming off a Super Bowl MVP performance, the league's most dynamic running back in Saquon Barkley and the 1-2 punch of A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith at wide receiver, the Birds should still have one of the most balanced and explosive attacks in the NFL in 2025.

We'll see if the defensive replacements and the stability on offense will be enough to bring a second straight Lombardi Trophy to Philly.

## 2

## CAN ANYONE CATCH THE CHIEFS IN THE AFC?

The Kansas City Chiefs have represented the AFC in the Super Bowl in five of the past six seasons, including the past three in a row. They've won three Lombardi Trophies over that stretch, and while they've come up short in blowout losses in the other two against worthy NFC adversaries, they've still managed to dispose of even their most powerful challengers in their own conference with startling regularity.

It's not like the AFC isn't loaded with talented teams. Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs have faced a Murderers' Row of candidates over those past six campaigns, from a Baltimore Ravens team that now boasts the two-headed monster of two-time league MVP Lamar Jackson and ageless running back Derrick Henry, to a Buffalo Bills club led by defending MVP Josh Allen. Joe Burrow's Cincinnati Bengals are the only team to have toppled Mahomes and the Chiefs in the AFC title game over the past six seasons.

Within the Chiefs' own division, both the Los Angeles Chargers and Denver Broncos won double-digit games last season, and with young franchise quarterbacks leading them, those clubs could provide some resistance.

But after a solid draft that saw Kansas City spend its first-round pick on a new franchise left tackle, add multiple high-upside defenders to the trenches on Day 2 and give Mahomes more explosive weapons on Day 3, it won't be surprising if they channel the frustration of a Super Bowl embarrassment into another AFC title.

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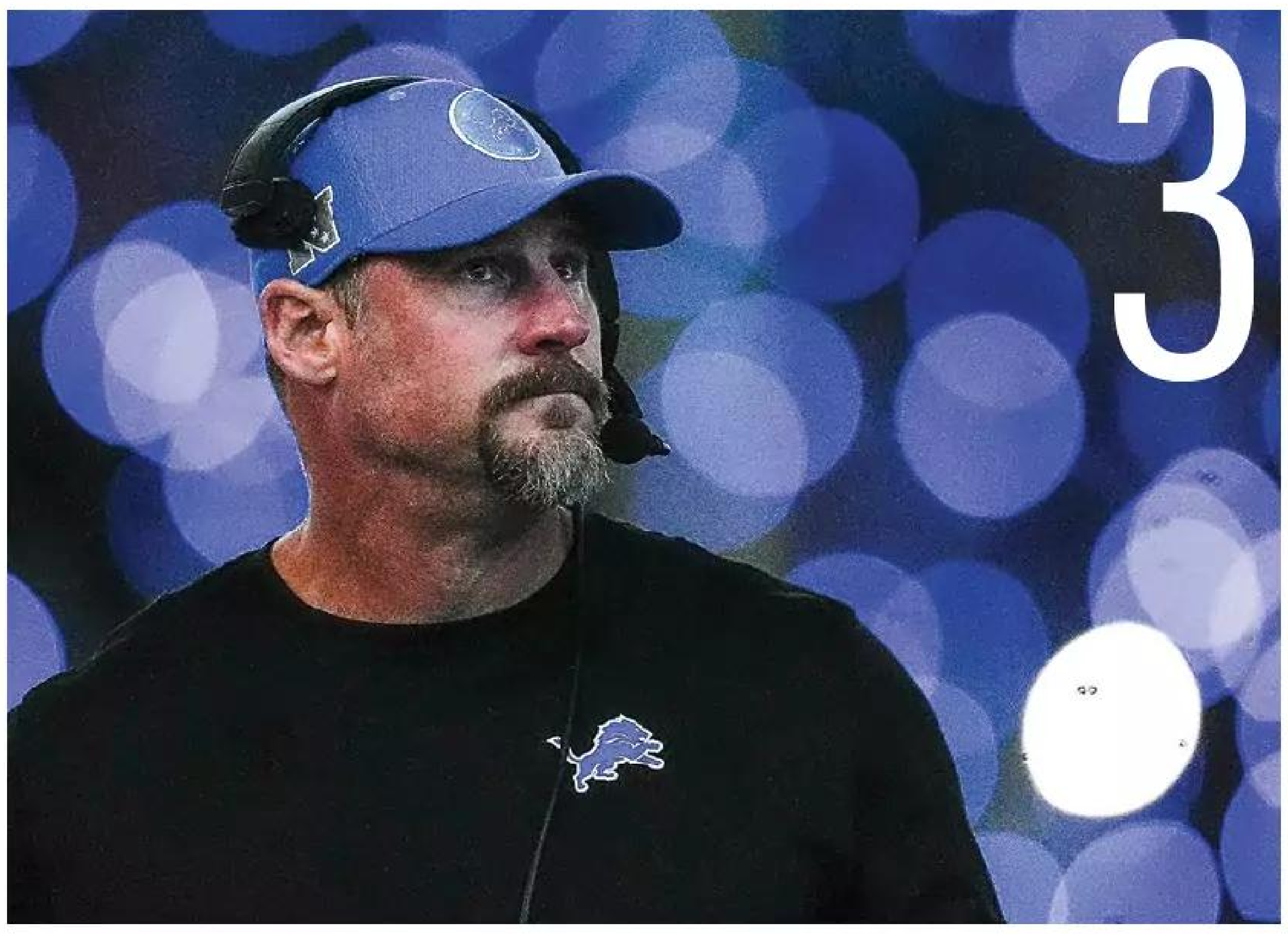


## 3

## WILL THE LIONS BOUNCE BACK?

It was a banner year for the Detroit Lions in 2025, at least throughout the regular season. After falling just short of their first Super Bowl appearance the year before, Dan Campbell's group looked like a team of destiny as it racked up a 15-2 record and secured a first-round bye as the No. 1 seed in the NFC side of the playoff bracket.

But their lofty aspirations came to a shocking halt in the divisional round of the postseason, as Jayden Daniels and the Washington Commanders went into Ford Field with a fury and left with a 45-31 victory.

If the Lions want to bounce back yet again and make a championship run, they'll have to do it in arguably the most challenging division in the league. The Minnesota Vikings and Green Bay Packers combined for a 25-9 record in the regular season last year, both making the playoffs, and the Chicago Bears could be much improved this season as a pesky challenger at the bottom of the NFC North. The Lions will also have to do it without both of their top assistant coaches from last season, as offensive coordinator Ben Johnson (Bears) and defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn (New York Jets) left to accept their own head-coaching gigs.

The Lions clearly have the talent to get to the top of the mountain, but they may be running out of chances to make the most of their current championship window.

## 4

## RETURN OF THE RB

It became a popular refrain in recent years that the NFL had “devalued” the running back position, but the pendulum appears to be swinging back in the other direction, and the resurgence has been fueled by grizzled veterans and young phenoms alike.

A pair of free-agent acquisitions proved that spending top dollar for elite backs can still pay huge dividends, as **Saquon Barkley** (Eagles) and **Derrick Henry** (Ravens) both turned in 2024 campaigns worthy of MVP consideration. Barkley was critical to Philly’s championship run, providing some iconic highlights on his way to topping 2,000 yards rushing. Henry teamed up with Lamar Jackson to give Baltimore an unstoppable ground attack, rushing for 1,921 yards and 16 touchdowns at age 30.

At the same time, both of the running backs who were top-12 draft picks in 2023 continued to prove their worth with stellar sophomore campaigns. Bijan Robinson accounted for 1,887 yards from scrimmage and 15 touchdowns for the Falcons, while Jahmyr Gibbs came up 71 yards shy of the 2,000-yard mark from scrimmage, finding the end zone 16 times on the ground and four times via the air for the Lions.

Two more running backs were just selected in the first round of the 2025 draft, including Boise State’s Ashton Jeanty, who went to the Raiders with the No. 6 overall selection.

Teams may be able to find serviceable backs without spending premium resources, but the special ones are proving they’re still worth the hefty investment.

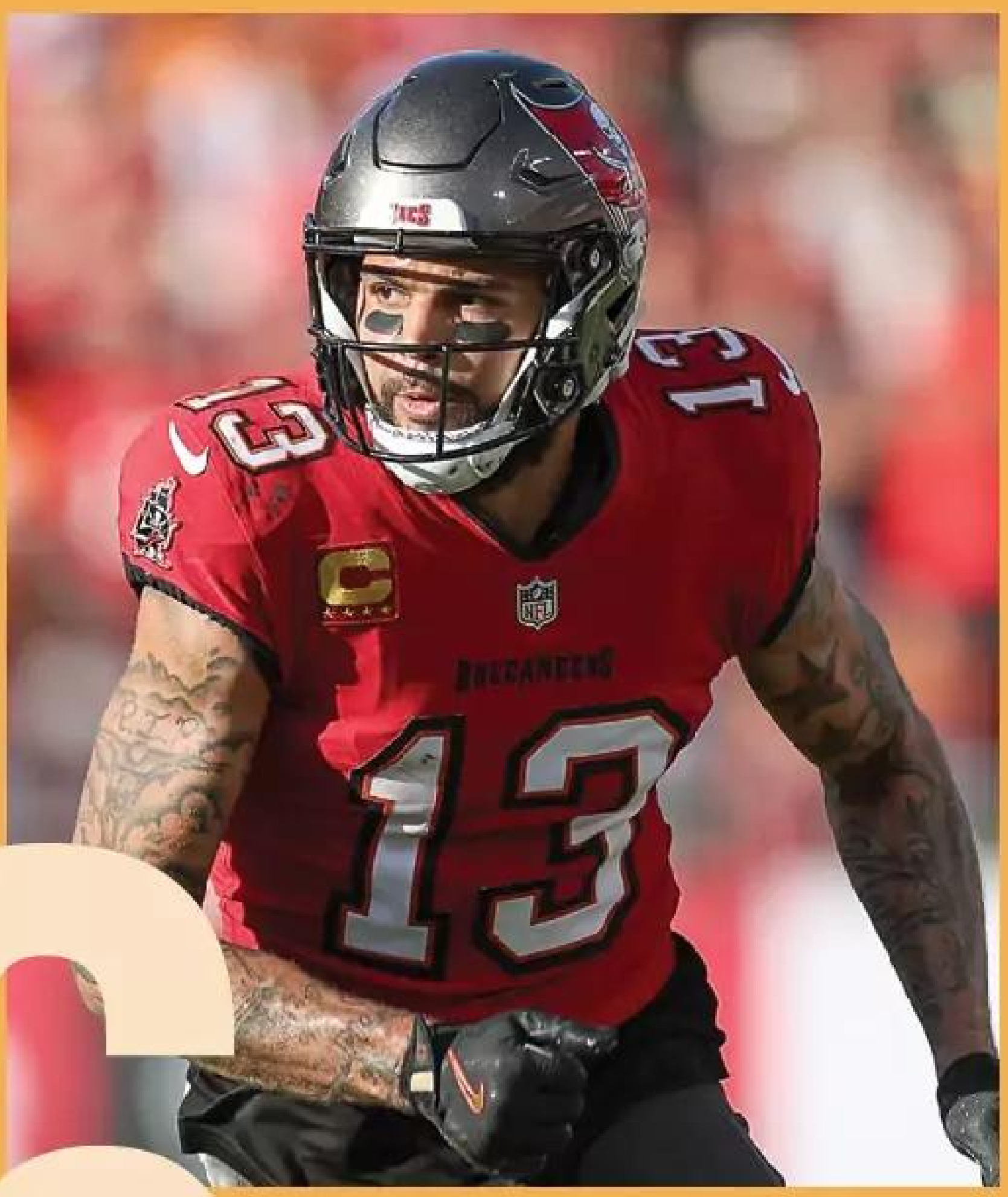
## 5

## TWO-WAY TRAVIS

When Travis Hunter transferred from Jackson State to Colorado, many wondered whether he’d be able to continue as a full-time starter on both sides of the ball at the power-conference level. He did just that, making the doubters look silly as he starred for the Buffaloes at both wide receiver and cornerback on his way to winning the Heisman Trophy.

Now that he’s in the NFL, there are once again those who doubt Hunter’s ability to reprise his two-way starter status.

The Jacksonville Jaguars made a bold move to trade up from the No. 5 overall pick in this year’s draft to land Hunter with the No. 2 selection, paying a hefty price to the Cleveland Browns that included their second-round pick this year and their first-rounder in 2026. Early indications are that the Jags will be willing to maximize Hunter’s rare skill set on both sides of the ball to some degree, giving Trevor Lawrence another dynamic pass-catching weapon and bolstering their coverage on defense. Don’t be surprised if Hunter silences the doubters yet again.



## 6

## MR. 1,000

If you’re looking for the face of consistency in the NFL, you’ll find it in Tampa Bay, where star wide receiver **Mike Evans** continues to check off some historic boxes on his way to building an iron-clad Hall of Fame case.

Despite missing a month last season due to a hamstring injury, Evans still managed to top 1,000 receiving yards for the 11th straight season, tying the legendary Jerry Rice for the most consecutive seasons of at least 1,000 receiving yards in NFL history. He was clearly a man on a mission, going on a tear once he returned from the injury and eclipsing the mark in dramatic fashion on the final play of the regular season.

Evans will turn 32 in August, but he’s shown no signs of slowing down. He’s the only player in league history to start his career with this many consecutive seasons of at least 1,000 receiving yards (Randy Moss is second with six), and if he tops that mark yet again in 2025, Evans will stand alone as the only NFL receiver with 12 straight 1,000-yard seasons.

Considering the Bucs’ entire starting offense is returning in 2025, and the offensive staff is also mostly intact from a year ago, it won’t be surprising if Evans makes even more history this season on his way to locking up a gold jacket.

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## 7

## A GIANT QB QUESTION

Last year, the New York Giants' quarterback situation was among the worst in the NFL, as they bounced between some combination of Daniel Jones, Drew Lock and Tommy DeVito on their way to a 3-14 record.

Heading into the 2025 season, Jones and Lock are playing elsewhere, and while DeVito is still on the roster, the Giants decided to throw just about everything they possibly could at an attempt to find both an immediate upgrade and a long-term solution at the game's most important position.

They brought in multiple veterans in free agency, signing Russell Wilson to a one-year deal to be the Week 1 starter while also inking a two-year deal with Jameis Winston to give them an experienced backup. With Cam Ward off the board when they went on the clock with the No. 3 overall pick in this year's draft, New York passed on the rest of this year's quarterback class in favor of Penn State edge rusher Abdul Carter, but they traded back into the latter part of the first round to land Ole Miss quarterback Jaxson Dart.

Dart may not have the high-end physical traits that Josh Allen had when then-Buffalo Bills offensive coordinator Brian Daboll helped develop him from raw upside prospect into an eventual league MVP, but the Giants' current head coach will be hoping that the combination of Wilson and Winston will win enough games for him to keep his job long enough to mold Dart into a franchise passer who can lead them back to relevance and contention.

## 8

## FROM ZERO-STAR TO NO. 1 PICK

Coming out of high school, **Cam Ward** was a complete recruiting afterthought, with no stars next to his name.

After he put up video-game numbers at FCS Incarnate Word, the football world finally began to take notice. He transferred to Washington State, where he kept producing at an impressive level, proving he could do it against power-conference competition. After initially declaring for the 2024 draft, where he likely would have been a mid-round selection, Ward opted to return to the college ranks for one more season, transferring to Miami (Fla.).

Ward was masterful for the Hurricanes last season, and even in a year in which most experts decried a lackluster quarterback class, the former no-star recruit proved himself worthy of the No. 1 overall pick. The Tennessee Titans opted for Ward over rare talents like Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter and Penn State pass-rusher Abdul Carter, making him their new franchise quarterback. Just two years after spending a high second-round pick on Will Levis, the Titans are banking on Ward's high-end physical tools, uncanny playmaking instincts, mental toughness, competitive fire and leadership qualities that fueled his rise to the top of the draft board.

FROM LEFT: JASEN VINLOVE-IMAGN IMAGES; RON CHENOY-IMAGN IMAGES

## 9

## WILL SHEDEUR GET THE LAST LAUGH?

Perhaps the biggest storyline from this year's draft was the fall of Colorado quarterback **Shedeur Sanders**, who was projected by most in the national media to be a first-round pick but ended up dropping all the way to the fifth round.

The Cleveland Browns snatched him up there after already spending an earlier pick at the end of the third round on Oregon QB Dillon Gabriel.

While many can debate the "why" in terms of the chasm between Sanders' pre-draft projections and his eventual draft slot, none of that matters now. What Sanders has before him is an opportunity to prove that he should have been a first-round pick after all, and he's landed in a spot that gives him plenty of advantages.

Head coach Kevin Stefanski's scheme is an ideal fit for Sanders' skill set, which overcomes his lack of elite physical tools and takes advantage of his accuracy, anticipation and decision-making. He joins a depth chart that features a couple of backup-caliber veterans (Joe Flacco, Kenny Pickett), a lame duck only tethered to the team by his awful contract (Deshaun Watson) and a fellow rookie (Gabriel). Throw in weapons like wide receiver Jerry Jeudy and tight end David Njoku and a better offensive line/running game than he ever had in Boulder, and Sanders has all the ingredients to find success in Cleveland.

## 10

## SWITCH-UP IN SEATTLE

The Seahawks didn't make the playoffs in 2024, but they were the only 10-win team in the league to miss the postseason cut, proving they were far closer to contending than needing a rebuild. That didn't stop Seattle's brass from making some massive changes in the offseason, saying goodbye to some of their most vital and beloved offensive playmakers.

Veteran quarterback Geno Smith was traded to the Las Vegas Raiders for a third-round pick in this year's draft, and the Seahawks replaced him by signing Sam Darnold to a three-year contract in free agency. Darnold had a career year in Minnesota with head coach Kevin O'Connell's offense in 2024, but Seattle is banking on that one season of success becoming his norm after an otherwise underwhelming career. They traded star wide receiver DK Metcalf to the Pittsburgh Steelers for a second-round pick in the 2025 draft, and they released longtime wideout Tyler Lockett. They signed former Los Angeles Ram Cooper Kupp to fill Lockett's veteran role in the receiver room, and they are clearly hoping that Jaxon Smith-Njigba takes a leap that can help offset Metcalf's departure.

They added some much-needed help for the offensive line with first-round pick Grey Zabel and grabbed a high-upside playmaker for the defense in second-round defensive back Nick Emmanwori. But this was a puzzling offseason for a team that barely missed the playoffs but still felt it was necessary to jettison three of the most important players who helped them win double-digit games. If Darnold, Kupp and Co. can't exceed or even match that win total in 2025, it will make those moves look even more confusing than they already do.

## 11

## VRABEL RETURNS TO FOXBOROUGH

After Bill Belichick's legendary run, his hand-picked successor lasted just one season in New England, as former Patriots linebacker and first-round pick Jerod Mayo was shown the door after posting a 4-13 record in 2025.

He's been replaced by another former linebacker who played under Belichick in New England. **Mike Vrabel** has taken the reins of the same franchise with which he won three Super Bowl rings.

After a 14-year NFL career (eight of them spent in New England), Vrabel returned to his alma mater to start his coaching career as linebackers coach at Ohio State. Seven years later, he was hired as the head coach of the Tennessee Titans in 2018, where he spent six seasons and amassed a 54-45 record, making three straight playoff appearances and winning back-to-back AFC South titles. But he was fired after consecutive 10-loss seasons, and after a year working in Cleveland as a consultant for the Browns, he's back in Foxborough to help return his old team to glory.

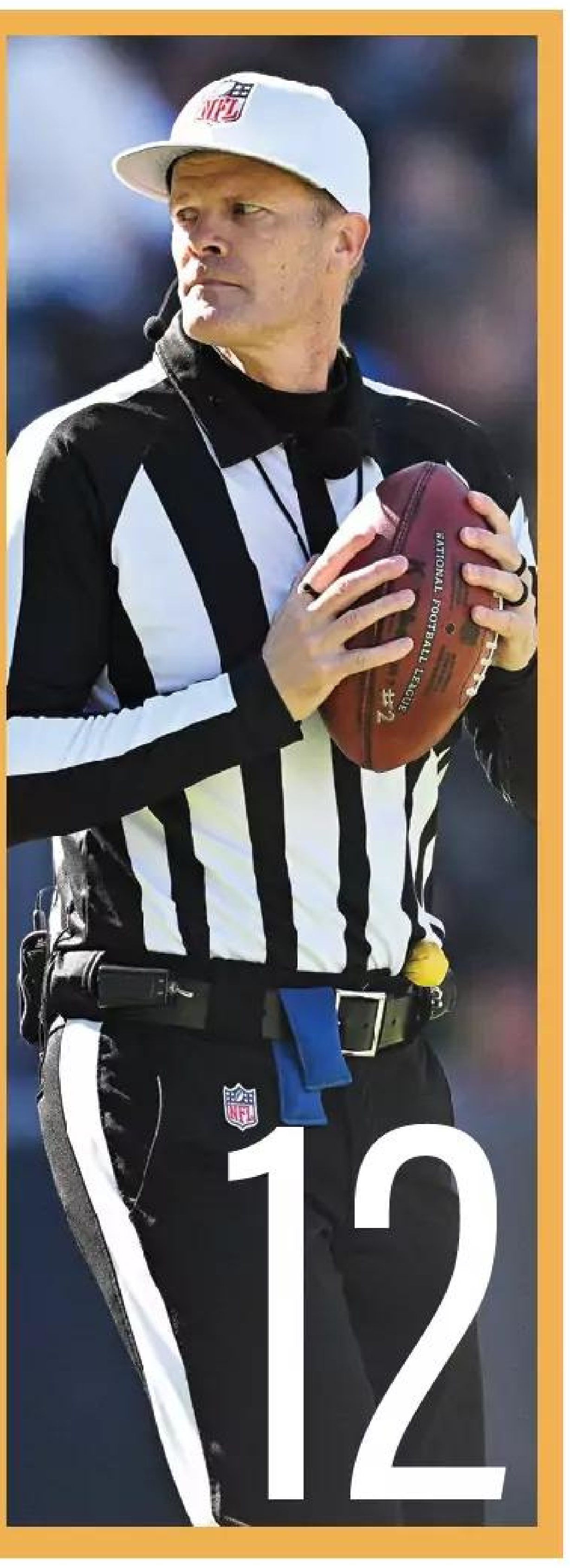
There's obviously plenty of work to be done when it comes to returning the Patriots to perennial playoff contention, but arguably the most important piece is already accounted for, as it looks like Vrabel has a promising franchise quarterback in Drake Maye, last year's No. 3 overall pick. If he can bring back the dominance the Pats' defense enjoyed when he was part of it as a player, and Maye can hit his ceiling, Vrabel might have a shot at bringing another Lombardi Trophy to New England.

## NEW RULES

The 2025 NFL season will feature a handful of new rulebook tweaks.

Kickoffs that reach the end zone for a touchback will now give the ball to the receiving team at the 35-yard line, a five-yard boost over last year's rule. The continued increase is an effort to encourage more actual kickoff returns, since the kicking team won't want their opponent starting drives with such advantageous field position.

Postseason overtime rules will now apply to regular-season games, meaning each team will get the opportunity to possess the ball, regardless of whether or not the initial receiving team scores a touchdown. Replay assist has been expanded, giving officials the ability to review and overturn judgment calls like roughing the passer and facemask penalties. Teams will also be allowed to wear alternate or throwback uniforms for up to four different regular-season games starting this season.



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## NEW-LOOK RAIDERS

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Speaking of Geno Smith and the Raiders, there's a new regime in Las Vegas, as former Seattle Seahawks head coach **Pete Carroll** replaces Antonio Pierce and Smith takes the reins for a new era under center.

After playing some inspired football over the past few seasons in Seattle, Smith immediately stabilizes what has been one of the worst quarterback situations in the NFL in recent years. He'll enjoy the presence of star tight end Brock Bowers, as well as the addition of rookie running back Ashton Jeanty, the No. 6 overall pick in this year's draft.

Also arriving is new general manager **John Spytek**, who gets his first chance to run the show from the personnel side after being a key member of a Tampa Bay Buccaneers front office that built a consistent winner during and after the Tom Brady era by drafting and developing home-grown talent.

Brady will be involved as a minority owner as well, and his experience and commitment to excellence should be another valuable asset for a franchise that hasn't won a playoff game since the 2002 season.

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## SOPHOMORE SIGNAL-CALLERS

The 2024 NFL Draft featured six quarterbacks among the first 12 picks for the first time in the modern draft era, including each of the top three overall selections. And there's plenty of promise for all of them to build on in Year 2.

**Jayden Daniels**, the No. 2 overall pick by the Washington Commanders, was the star of the group. He put together an incredible individual season while also leading a Commanders team that had the second-worst record in the league the year prior all the way to the NFC title game. Daniels' continued development could make Washington a contender for years to come.

No. 1 overall pick Caleb Williams showed flashes of brilliance for the Chicago Bears, and with even more explosive weapons at his disposal this year, he could take a big leap in 2025. The same could be said for Drake Maye, who should have a much-improved offensive line and a talented group of weapons to help him maximize his lofty ceiling with the New England Patriots.

Michael Penix Jr. should have been given the starting job over Kirk Cousins far earlier last season, and that move could have prevented the Atlanta Falcons from letting the NFC South title slip away down the stretch. That won't be an issue in 2025. In Denver, Bo Nix looks like the perfect franchise quarterback for Sean Payton's offense. And with Sam Darnold now in Seattle, the road is clear for J.J. McCarthy to take over as the starter in Minnesota.

This group already made history on draft weekend last year, and it looks like they're just getting started.

FROM TOP: KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

## BEST OF THE REST

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There are way more than 15 things worth watching this NFL season, so here are some other compelling storylines for fans to follow in 2025:

→How will Josh Allen follow up last year's MVP campaign?

→Is this Mike McDaniel's last chance in Miami?

→Will new head coach Aaron Glenn and quarterback Justin Fields turn the Jets around?

→Can anyone stop the Lamar Jackson/Derrick Henry train?

→Will Mike Tomlin raise the ceiling in Pittsburgh or keep doing just enough to get by?

→Did the Bengals keep (and add) enough around Joe Burrow to return to prominence?

→Does anyone else in the AFC South challenge C.J. Stroud and the Texans?

→Will Jim Harbaugh and Sean Payton lead their AFC West teams back to the playoffs?

→Can a healthy Dak Prescott lead Dallas back to relevance?

→Will Jordan Love and the Packers leapfrog the Lions and Vikings in the NFC North?

→How will Bryce Young fare in Year 3 with the Panthers?

→Did the Saints make the right call drafting Tyler Shough over Shedeur Sanders?

→Does Matthew Stafford have one more deep playoff run left for the Rams?

→Have the 49ers missed their title window, and will Brock Purdy get his massive contract?

→Will Kyler Murray live up to his hefty cap number and lead the Cardinals to contention?

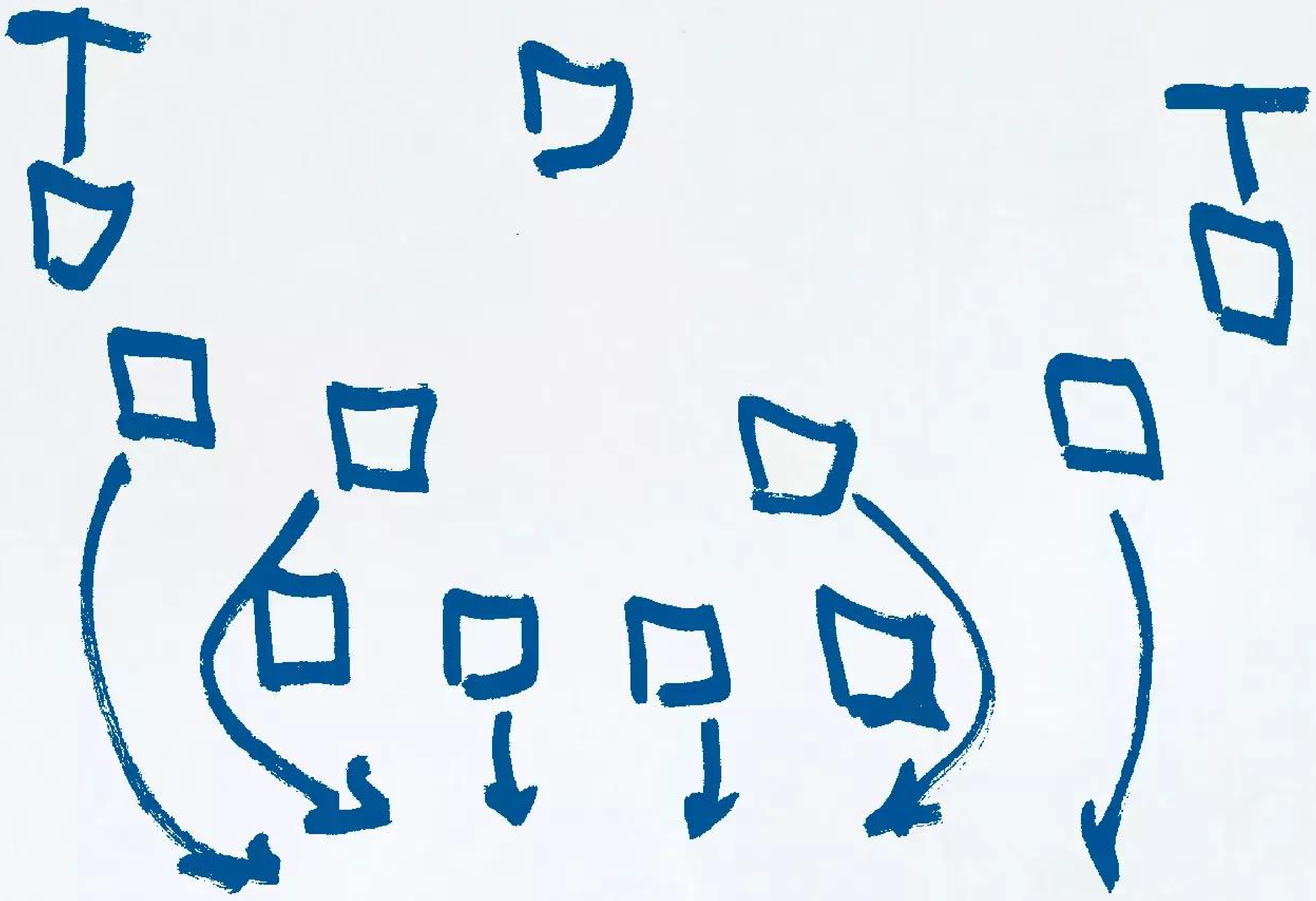
# MOVES &

Throughout the history of pro football, a schematic revolution on one side of the ball has forced a schematic revolution on the other. The T-formation on offense had defenses moving from seven- and six-man fronts to five-man fronts. Then, more complex passing games in the late 1940s and early '50s (think of the Los Angeles Rams' "Point-Per-Minute" offenses from 1949-53) fostered the development of the Umbrella defenses of the mid-1950s, which were the first defenses we could call truly modern. The even more advanced passing games of the early 1960s, especially in the American Football League, brought about zone defenses and the advent of nickel and dime coverages, with five and six defensive backs.

On and on it has gone. The West Coast offense had defensive coordinators putting forth new blitz packages like Buddy Ryan's 46 with the Chicago Bears. The old two-back pro set formation went the way of the dinosaur as offenses wanted three and four receivers on the field more often, which led to far more variable fronts and coverages on the defensive side of the ball.

Now, there's more schematic variance than ever before at all levels of football, and the NFL is obviously no exception. As we head into the 2025 campaign, here are six schematic trends to watch — concepts we've seen more and more over the past few seasons and the concepts we can expect to become staples until and unless someone on the other side of the ball can figure out ways to counter them.

# CounterMoves



6 Emerging NFL Trends

By Doug Farrar

## OFFENSE: PRE-SNAP MOTION

Pre-snap shifts — in which offensive players move from one spot to another before the snap and stay stationary until the snap — have been around nearly as long as football has existed. But pre-snap motion, in which a player moves from one spot to another and stays in motion at the snap, didn't really come into the NFL until the 1980s.

Bill Walsh told the story of when he was the Cincinnati Bengals' offensive coordinator in the mid-1970s, and tight end Bob Trumpy lined up on the wrong side of the formation by mistake during a game. Trumpy hurried over to the other side of the formation, and the Oakland Raiders, Cincinnati's opponent that day, had no idea how to deal with it.

Walsh started putting Trumpy in motion, and by the time the legendary head coach had built the San Francisco 49ers' offense into an all-time power a decade later, pre-snap motion was a fairly major part of his passing game.

Today, it's the rare quarterback who doesn't benefit from some kind of pre-snap motion. Early on, it was about giving the quarterback a coverage indicator. If a defender followed the man in motion across the field, it was likely man coverage. If the defense responded to the motion by keeping the defenders in their spots and bumping everyone over a bit, it was likely zone.

Motion is now used to define and disrupt. The best offensive minds will use pre-snap motion to target a specific defender or a particular area of coverage by introducing a target into that area late in the pre-snap process with the shift, and accentuating it with motion.

In 2024, quarterbacks without pre-snap motion completed 5,457 of 8,586 passes (63.6%) for 60,642 yards (7.06 yards per attempt), 373 touchdowns, 178 interceptions and a 90.32 passer rating.

With pre-snap motion, quarterbacks completed 6,680 of 9,995 passes (66.8%) for 72,414 yards (7.25 yards per attempt), 472 touchdowns, 227 interceptions and a 94.24 passer rating. And when quarterbacks had the eventual target in motion, they completed 1,985 of 2,644 passes (75.1%) for 18,165 yards (6.87 yards per attempt), 108 touchdowns, 43 interceptions and a 100.11 passer rating.

## DEFENSE: SHIFTING SAFETIES

Defenses are starting to react to all this motion on offense with their own sleights of hand. More than ever, defensive coordinators are aligning their safeties in a certain pre-snap look and moving them post-snap to try to create offensive confusion — and therefore hesitation.

With shifting safeties, defenses can give quarterbacks middle of the field open (MOFO) or middle of the field closed (MOFC) pre-snap reads and then show the complete opposite look post-snap. That's the most popular safety shift, where one of two safeties either comes down from the deep third to cover in the box of the slot, or vice versa.

There are also clockwise and counterclockwise shifts in which both safeties will stay in the deep third but one will stay in his pre-snap area and the other will drop deeper to give the quarterback uncertain looks on vertical routes and maintain the MOFO and MOFC reads. Also, those shifts can have one safety coming down in a hurry from the deep third to affect receivers at the first and second levels of the defense.

Press-float shifts will have one safety in the deep third and another coming down to affect a receiver with press-style coverage.

Brian Flores, the Minnesota Vikings defensive coordinator, is perhaps the NFL's most diabolical dispenser of safety switches. Flores' shift distances are the NFL's most drastic more often than not, and he's not static before the first coverage look — Flores likes to present an offense with an additional level of chaos by forcing quarterbacks to wonder what the first coverage is before the second shift even begins.

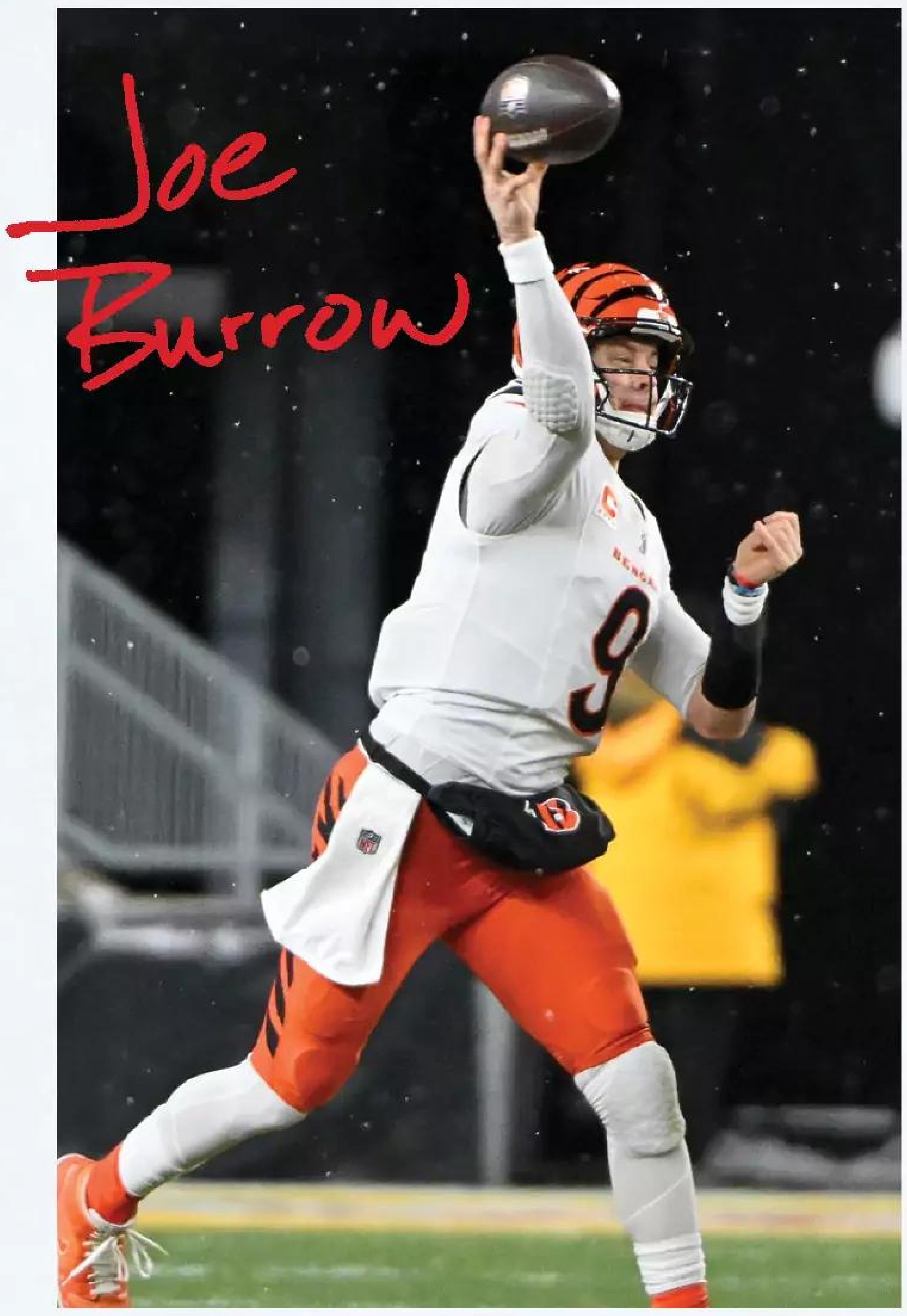
Just as pre-snap motion often changes the pass strength and run strength of the defense, shifting safeties will alter how and where running backs run and quarterbacks throw. And in an NFL where milliseconds can seem like minutes, forcing hesitation on either side of the ball is so much of what the modern game is about.

## OFFENSE: QUICK-GAME PASSING

Offensive coordinators are calling more quick-game passes than ever before. In the 2024 season, there were 4,755 dropbacks in which the quarterback threw the ball with either a zero- or one-step drop. If you go back five years before that to the 2019 season, there were only 3,940 such dropbacks.

A primary reason for this is the increased use of run-pass options, which really became a staple concept in the NFL when the Philadelphia Eagles won Super Bowl LII at the end of the 2017 season. Run-pass options had been a major part of collegiate passing games before, and as is the case with many schematic conceits, it wasn't long before things moved their way up to the next level.

Another reason for more quick game is simply that when you have quarterbacks and receivers aligned with quicker routes, you can get under coverage and increase your completion percentage. Last season, quarterbacks completed 70.8% of their passes with zero- or one-step drops — 3,111 completions on 4,394 attempts for 27,613 yards, 179 touchdowns, 85 interceptions and a 97.8 passer rating. A large percentage of those quick passes came in the red zone, which explains the high touchdown percentage, but there are NFL offenses that are building a large part of their passing games out of that concept.



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Last season, Joe Burrow of the Cincinnati Bengals led the league with 246 dropbacks with zero or one step; he completed 74.2% of his attempts from those dropbacks with 17 touchdown passes and four interceptions.

How are modern defenses dealing with all this quick-game passing? By going back to the future with a coverage concept that is decidedly old-school.

## DEFENSE: PRESS COVERAGE

Quick-game routes do not let you defend over the top without allowing easy completions, and your pass-rushers may not have time to get to the quarterback to even pressure him, much less sack him, before the ball is on its way. The best way to counter all that is to aggressively press the receivers at the line of scrimmage. Ideally, diverting receivers and upsetting the timing of those routes negates the advantages of the passing game, and NFL defensive coordinators are aligning with that theory.

Steve Spagnuolo of the Kansas City Chiefs has led the press coverage charge since he became the Chiefs' defensive coordinator in 2019, and it's no coincidence that the Chiefs have made five of the six Super Bowls in that time, winning three. In 2019, the Chiefs had at least one cornerback in press coverage on a league-high 86% of their snaps. Last season, Kansas City led the NFL once again with an 88% press rate. In 2024, 10 teams had two cornerbacks in press coverage at least 20% of the time, and 12 teams had three cornerbacks in press coverage at least 5% of the time — the Detroit Lions led that group at 12%.

As is the case with two-deep coverage (which we'll discuss later), press coverage isn't just basic press coverage anymore. There's straight-up aggressive press coverage, where the cornerback disrupts the route and goes wherever the receiver goes. There's press-bail coverage, where the cornerback starts in press and then moves to a hybrid off-coverage to keep an eye on the backfield. But the big deal now is press-match coverage, where the press part of the coverage isn't quite as aggressive, and the cornerback moves to straight-up man coverage as soon as the receiver declares his route.

While you won't see as much press coverage as you may have in the NFL of the 1960s and before, when zone coverage wasn't yet a primary construct and it was all about the battle at the line of scrimmage, you can expect this particular press-match revolution against quick-game passes to keep on rolling.

## OFFENSE: CONDENSED FORMATIONS

As NFL passing games become more complex with the intention of beating defenses with their own expanded concepts, and as NFL offensive minds look to approximate the advantages given to college quarterbacks with wider hashmarks (40 feet in the NCAA as opposed to 18 feet, six inches in the NFL), the use of condensed formations has increased. By "condensed," we mean that all potential targets are aligned inside the numbers, as opposed to spreading the receivers out to the boundaries.

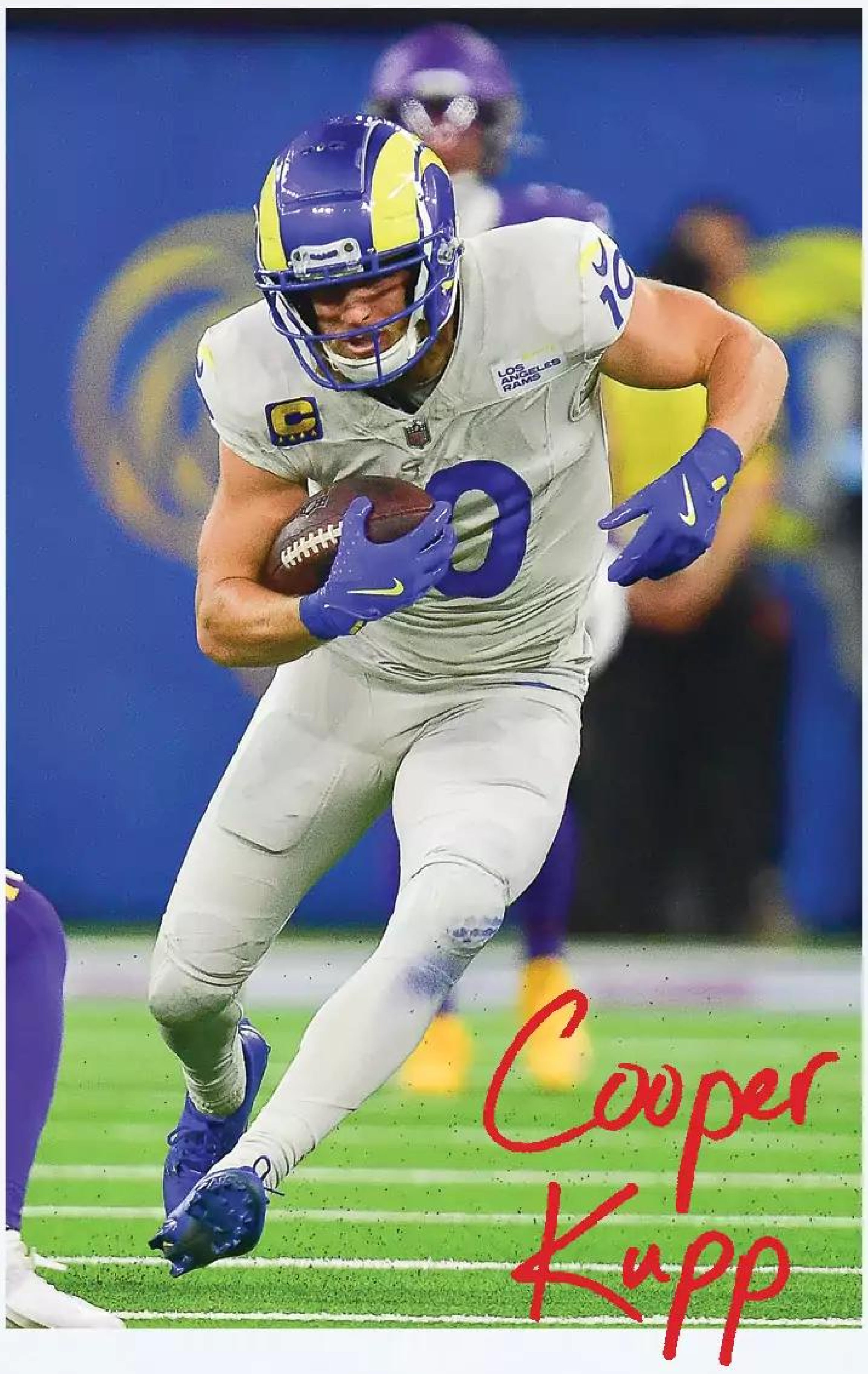
In the 2024 NFL season, 23 teams lined up in condensed formations at least 30% of the time, led by the Los Angeles Rams and the San Francisco 49ers, who each did it on 60% of their offensive snaps. Five years before, in 2019, the Rams led the NFL with a 53% condensed formation rate, and the 49ers did it 50% of the time; only three other teams (the Houston Texans, Las Vegas Raiders, and Cincinnati Bengals) went over 30%.

Why the increase? First, when your formations are more condensed, your receivers have more room to move in coverage. Second, with cornerbacks tasked to play more aggressive press coverage (more on that in a minute), it's more difficult to press receivers who are aligned closer to each other. Traffic becomes a problem. And third, having receivers come to the line of scrimmage closer to each other forces a blurring between the concept of outside and slot receivers.

When former Rams receiver Cooper Kupp signed with the Seattle Seahawks this offseason, he was asked how he would work with Jaxon Smith-Njigba, since both are characterized as slot receivers. Who's the "outside guy?"

"In eight years with the Rams, I think it's tagged with the slot, but I don't know how you determine that when we're in condensed formations," Kupp says. "I'm outside, but I'm running a slot route. A lot of times I was outside, and I'm not sure if it was being tagged as a slot route or not. But the ability to move in an offense is being able to 'formation' guys to be anywhere. You've got to learn the whole thing because you could be in any one of these spots at any time."

If you've got to learn the whole thing on offense, imagine how complex it gets for the defense.



GARY A. VASQUEZ-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE: TWO-DEEP COVERAGE

A decade ago, when 31 other NFL teams were desperately trying to find their own version of the Seattle Seahawks' Legion of Boom defense, single-high coverage was all the rage. Especially Cover-3 — zone coverage with a single deep safety.

Eventually, though, 31 NFL teams found out that if you didn't have Earl Thomas as your deep safety and Richard Sherman and Kam Chancellor as two of your other pass defenders, single-high coverage was fraught with issues. Especially as the NFL worked to more of a 3x1 league in receiver distribution, those four targets could beat single-high with too many vertical routes to cover credibly.

So, the wise decision was eventually made to go back to the two-high coverage that was the standard back in the 1990s and 2000s, when the defenses popularized by Tony Dungy and his acolytes were all the schematic rage.

Two-deep concepts have increased in the past half-decade, and it's not just the old Cover-2 of Bud Carson's Pittsburgh Steelers of the 1970s or the Tampa-2 stuff Dungy brought in.

Rod Rust, who coached in the NFL from 1978-96 and was a defensive coordinator for the Kansas City Chiefs, New England Patriots, Pittsburgh Steelers and New York Giants, is widely considered to be the father of quarters coverage, in which four defensive backs (two cornerbacks, two safeties) each address one quarter of the field in coverage. Rust liked to say that with the basic, fundamental shell that quarters coverages gave you, you could morph into just about anything else from it. Which is where the aforementioned safety switches come in.

That's become ever more true in the last decade, and Cover-6 — the offshoot in which defenses play man coverage on one side of the field and zone on the other — has become newly popular.

In the 2024 season, when facing single-high coverage (Cover-1 and Cover-3), quarterbacks completed 6,573 of 8,569 passes (78.5%) for 65,497 yards (7.83 yards per attempt), 304 touchdowns, 181 interceptions and a 100.91 passer rating.

When facing two-high coverage (Cover-2, 2-Man, Cover-4, Cover-6), quarterbacks completed 4,395 of 6,610 passes (66.5%) for 49,367 yards (7.47 yards per attempt), 165 touchdowns, 164 interceptions and an 86.59 passer rating.

The math involved here is simple, and the effects on enemy offenses are quite clear: Until someone comes up with a way to counter these new and more complicated strains of two-deep coverage, these trends will continue.

*All advanced metrics are courtesy of Pro Football Focus and Sports Info Solutions.*

# RB RENAISSANCE

## HOW THE RUNNING BACK POSITION MADE ITS COMEBACK

**BY KYLE WOOD**

Two years after several of the NFL's top running backs convened to discuss the dreary financial outlook of their shared profession, things are starting to look up for the league's most undervalued position.

Saquon Barkley's resurgent 2024 season with the Philadelphia Eagles helped bring the running back position back to prominence — 2,005 rushing yards, Offensive Player of the Year honors and a Lombardi Trophy to top it all off will do that.

Barkley's all-time campaign was almost overshadowed by what Derrick Henry accomplished with the Ravens. Henry continues to defy Father Time, putting together a 1,900-yard season at 30 that helped propel Baltimore to the playoffs.

Teams in the 2025 NFL Draft took notice after two of the league's most analytically minded franchises bucked recent trends by investing in running backs with calculated risks that paid off.

The result was the Raiders making Ashton Jeanty the highest-drafted running back since Barkley went second overall in 2018. Las Vegas selected the Heisman Trophy runner-up out of Boise State with the No. 6 pick. The Chargers followed suit, drafting North Carolina product Omarion Hampton 22nd. After no running backs went in the first round in 2024, two were taken in 2025. And while only one came off the board in the first 60 picks in the previous draft, five were drafted in that range in April.

While that's partially a reflection of a highly regarded running back class, it's also representative of reinvigorated investment in a position that had largely been disregarded in the draft and on the open market as of late. The San Francisco 49ers with Christian McCaffrey a few years ago and now the Eagles with Barkley have dedicated considerable resources toward acquiring and retaining the league's best running backs. And in the case of the Raiders (Jeanty), Chargers (Hampton) and the Atlanta Falcons (Bijan Robinson) and Detroit Lions (Jahmyr Gibbs) in 2023, front offices are spending premium draft capital to acquire top-end talent at the position, too.

Philadelphia rewarded the 28-year-old Barkley with a record-breaking two-year, $41.2 million extension in the offseason that made him the first running back in NFL history to cross the $20 million per year threshold. Barkley's contract figure surpassed McCaffrey's two-year, $38 million extension, which he signed in the summer of 2024 after helping carry San Francisco to a Super Bowl appearance.

Barkley and McCaffrey are the league's past two Offensive Player of the Year winners. Before they won the award in consecutive seasons, the last time running backs did so in back-to-back years was Shaun Alexander in 2005 and LaDainian Tomlinson in 2006.

The start of the 2025 season in September is still months away, but Barkley has emerged as an early betting favorite to defend his title as reigning Offensive Player of the Year — something no player has done since Marshall Faulk from 1999-2001. Meanwhile, Jeanty has the best odds to win Offensive Rookie of the Year, which no first-year running back has done since Barkley.

In a pre-draft essay for *The Player's Tribune*, Jeanty wrote that while watching Barkley lead the Eagles to the Super Bowl, he thought: "That can be me." In the piece, he explained where he got his confidence from and charted his unique journey to the NFL.

Jeanty's college career is more than enough to justify his aspiration to follow in the footsteps of the game's best running back — as lofty as that goal might be.

The cream of an elite crop of running backs: ageless Derrick Henry (left) and Saquon Barkley, who combined for a staggering 3,926 rushing yards and 5.9 yards per carry in 2024.

PATRICK SMITH/GETTY IMAGES)

After a sophomore season that saw him win Mountain West Offensive Player of the Year and earn an All-America nod, he nearly doubled his rushing output from 1,347 yards to 2,601, the second-most in a single season in college football history behind Barry Sanders' 2,628 in 1988. Jeanty also led the Broncos to a 12-2 record and their first College Football Playoff appearance.

In his article, Jeanty made a strong case for the value of the running back position in today's game, pointing out that teams that made deep runs in the NFL playoffs "had a solo running back — or at least a guy in that position who could make plays for them and take some of the load off the quarterback."

That would apply to the Eagles and Barkley, of course, but also to the Bills and James Cook, a second-round pick in 2022 who's coming off back-to-back Pro Bowl appearances.

That "solo running back" label is less applicable to the NFC runner-up Washington Commanders, whose leading rusher in 2024 was rookie quarterback Jayden Daniels. Washington brought in veteran Austin Ekeler last offseason to pair with 2022 third-round pick Brian Robinson Jr., but Daniels still paced the team with 891 yards on the ground.

Comparatively, the Chiefs have invested even less in their running back room. Kansas City counted on veteran Kareem Hunt during their quest for a three-peat that ultimately came up short. The Chiefs reunited with Hunt, as former seventh-round selection Isiah Pacheco missed much of the year due to injury.

A two-time Super Bowl winner, Pacheco has been more than serviceable for Kansas City since he entered the league, but the wheels fell off the team's rushing attack this past season. The Chiefs, who have one of the longest active droughts without a 1,000-yard rusher in the league, ran for just 49 yards in their blowout Super Bowl LIX loss to Philadelphia. Quarterback Patrick Mahomes led the team with 25 yards on the ground.

It's no secret that offenses are passing more often in the NFL, and Jeanty argued that this trend makes it more important than ever for teams to have a capable rushing attack in place in order to have a balanced offense. League-wide, 2024 was one of the most efficient rushing seasons on record.

Running backs are also involved in the passing game in more ways than

*continued on page 20*

*from page 20*

one. They are increasingly counted on as pass-catchers, as evidenced by McCaffrey's setting the single-season running back reception record with 116 catches in 2019. And then there's the matter of pass-blocking to keep the quarterback safe, another responsibility that falls to the running back when they're not toting the ball or running a route.

"It's just all about how you want to use them," Jeanty said. "So I think if you look at running back, from that standpoint, it's not just running the ball, right? There's three different phases of what a running back does, and I think that brings value to any offense if that guy is doing it at a high level."

Several of the running backs doing it at a high level in recent years were drafted early, like McCaffrey and Barkley. Gibbs and Bijan Robinson, Pro Bowl picks a season ago, also fit that mold. And naturally, Las Vegas has high hopes for what Jeanty can do in 2025 and beyond — the same goes for the Chargers with Hampton. But not every high-performing running back is a Round 1 pick.

Henry, who won the Heisman at Alabama, went in the second round in 2016 and didn't become a full-time starter until his third year in the league. The Buccaneers found Oregon product Bucky Irving, their first 1,000-yard rusher since Doug Martin in 2015, in the fourth round of the 2024 draft. Kyren Williams was drafted out of Notre Dame by the Los Angeles Rams in the fifth round in 2022 — he didn't start until his second season when he was named second-team All-Pro. The list goes on.

Increasingly, teams are adding to existing strengths at running back. Perhaps no team exemplifies this better

Christian McCaffrey (above) set the standard for dual-threat backs, gashing defenses via both runs and receptions. Rookie Ashton Jeanty (left) hopes to follow in his footsteps.

KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

than the Lions, who lost 2020 second-round pick D'Andre Swift and NFL touchdown leader Jamaal Williams at the end of the 2022 season.

Detroit addressed that hole by signing free agent David Montgomery the following offseason. That wasn't enough for head coach Dan Campbell's hard-nosed Lions, who spent the 12th pick on Gibbs a few months later. No team — not even the Eagles — has run for more touchdowns over the past two seasons than Detroit.

The Chargers employed a similar approach by signing 2021 first-round pick Najee Harris in free agency and drafting Hampton soon after. As of mid-May, 10 frunning backs drafted in the first round are on active rosters — Los Angeles employs two of them. The Bolts haven't had a 1,000-yard rusher since Melvin Gordon III in 2017, but that drought might end this season with Harris and Hampton in head coach Jim Harbaugh's run-heavy offense.

The Falcons went out and spent a top-10 pick on Robinson two years ago after seemingly finding gold in Tyler Allgeier the season before. A fifth-round choice out of BYU, Allgeier ran for 1,035 yards as a rookie. Now, he and Robinson are the 1-2 punch in Atlanta, and Robinson has already emerged as one of the league's best pass-catching backs.

The Seahawks, who infamously missed on Rashaad Penny in the first round of the 2018 draft, have taken two swings on second-round running backs in recent years. In 2022, Seattle snagged Kenneth Walker III, a talented back out of Michigan State who has dealt with injuries early in his career. There to fill in when Walker is on the mend is Zach Charbonnet, a UCLA product who shined in a handful of spot starts.

The Vikings, who roster two of the highest-paid skill players at their respective positions in wide receiver Justin Jefferson and tight end T.J. Hockenson, also invest in their running backs. Minnesota agreed to re-sign 30-year-old Aaron Jones Sr. to a two-year, $20 million deal that made him the sixth-highest-paid player at the position in average annual value.

Among many lethally talented pass-catching backs, Bijan Robinson may ultimately prove to be the best of all.

STEPHEN LEW-IMAGN IMAGES

Roughly a week later, the Vikes traded for Jordan Mason, who ran well in relief of McCaffrey a season ago in San Francisco. Mason, 26, was promptly signed to a two-year, $10.5 million extension. Between Mason and Jones, Minnesota has one of the highest-paid running back tandems in the NFL. Therein lies a benefit of having a quarterback (J.J. McCarthy) on a rookie contract.

The Panthers are not as committed to the running back position as some other teams in the NFL, but they've certainly invested in it. After McCaffrey played just three games in 2020, Carolina spent a fourth-round pick on Chuba Hubbard, who took until 2023 — the year after McCaffrey was traded to San Francisco — to truly take off.

Since then, the Panthers spent a second-round pick on Jonathon Brooks, who missed most of his rookie year due to an ACL tear and will be out his sophomore season after tearing the ligament again in December. Carolina also signed Hubbard to a four-year, $33.2 million extension during the 2024 season and then proceeded to sign Rico Dowdle to a one-year, $2.75 million contract. Georgia product Trevor Etienne joined the fray in April when the Panthers spent a fourth-round pick on him.

There are still varying schools of thought on running back value and how to go about assembling a running back room. The Eagles were the run-heaviest team in the league a season ago. But some of the teams who are in the same ballpark as far as rush rate — namely Buffalo, Pittsburgh and Washington — don't pay their lead backs anywhere near what Barkley earns.

Over the past decade, the salary of the lead running back on Super Bowl-winning teams was often below $1 million. Detractors often pointed to that as evidence that a team could not win the Lombardi Trophy while paying a running back at the top of the market.

The 49ers nearly disproved that argument two years ago with McCaffrey, who was the league's highest-paid running back when San Francisco lost to the Chiefs in Super Bowl LVIII. The following season, the Eagles successfully did so with Barkley getting paid more than every fellow RB but McCaffrey and the Indianapolis Colts' Jonathan Taylor. Philadelphia in turn rewarded Barkley by making him the highest-paid running back in history.

The reigning Super Bowl champions are set to enter the 2025 NFL season as the betting favorites to go back-to-back. And if they do, a running back will lead them there.

# MEN IN THE MIDDLE

## THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF DEFENSIVE TACKLES IN TODAY'S NFL

BY DOUG FARRAR

BILL STREICHER-IMAGN IMAGES

In Super Bowl LIX, the Philadelphia Eagles trounced the Kansas City Chiefs 40-221, and they throttled Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs' passing game with six sacks and 16 total pressures. When pressured, Mahomes completed only four passes on nine attempts for 48 yards, one touchdown, one interception and a 58.8 passer rating.

Perhaps most remarkably, the Eagles got all that pressure on Mahomes without a single blitz in the entire game — they never brought more than four rushers a single time. This was a testimony to the brilliance of defensive coordinator Vic Fangio, but it was also a major insight into the importance of interior pressure with the Eagles' defense.

In that game, three of Philadelphia's sacks and 10 of their pressures came from their interior defensive linemen — Milton Williams, Jalen Carter, Jordan Davis and Moro Ojomo. The Eagles did use stunts to amplify the talent of that interior defensive line, where their edge defenders would loop inside post-snap, but Philly's inside guys were able, more often than not, to create their own pressure, and that made all the difference. It allowed Fangio to utilize his preferred two-high coverage on 21 of Mahomes' 32 passing attempts without worrying about losing strength up front. The Chiefs weren't going to run the ball much down 24-0 at halftime, so the Eagles could just tee off and go after Mahomes.

Overall, it was perhaps the perfect encapsulation of the importance of interior defensive linemen in today's NFL. Williams parlayed that game (and an outstanding 2024 season) into a four-year, $104 million contract with the New England Patriots that included $63 million guaranteed. Which, from a guaranteed money perspective, made Williams the sixth-richest interior defensive tackle in the NFL, behind Chris Jones of the Kansas City Chiefs ($95 million), Christian Wilkins of the Las Vegas Raiders ($82.75 million), Nnamdi Madubuike of the Baltimore Ravens ($75.5 million), Quinnen Williams of the New York Jets ($66 million) and Derrick Brown of the Carolina Panthers ($63.165 million).

There are now 12 interior defensive linemen making more than $50 million guaranteed on their current contracts, as opposed to just nine edge rushers, and edge rushers are seen in the court of public opinion as the more important position.

Why has the landscape changed? In the 2025 league year, there are eight interior defensive linemen with salary cap hits of more than $20 million. In 2020, there were only two — Aaron Donald of the Los Angeles Rams and DeForest Buckner of the Indianapolis Colts. Donald might be the best interior defensive lineman ever to play the position(s), which tends to skew things from a historical perspective. Today, big contracts for the bigger guys are the norm. This was accentuated by a 2025 draft that may have been deeper at IDL than any class before it. Four IDL were selected in the top 21 picks in the draft — five in the first round — and 30 were selected overall.

Philadelphia Eagles defensive tackles Jordan Davis (90), Jalen Carter (98) and Milton Williams (93).

JAMES LANG-IMAGN IMAGES

So, here's why NFL teams see interior defensive linemen as more important than ever before.

## THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS

Obviously, the closer you are to the quarterback in terms of straight-line distance, the more quickly you can eliminate the gap between you and him to create pressure. So, interior defensive linemen have a bead on the quarterback, especially when it comes to the kinds of quick-game throws that are increasing in frequency and can leave edge defenders out in the cold regarding the timing of their pressures.

Last season, on passes of zero or one step in the dropback, there were four edge defenders with 10 or more quarterback pressures — T.J. Watt of the Pittsburgh Steelers with 14, Myles Garrett of the Cleveland Browns with 12, Trey Hendrickson of the Cincinnati Bengals with 12 and Micah Parsons of the Dallas Cowboys with 11.

Meanwhile, there were five interior defensive linemen with 10 or more total pressures on those quickest possible throws — Cam Heyward of the Pittsburgh Steelers and Zach Allen of the Denver Broncos with 13, Carter with 12 and Madubuike

*continued on page 24*

KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

> "The creativity part, I think that's what I see most in this group. Here are the big ends who can move down. Here's the outside guys who can go inside. ... You want a league of matchups, and who can you work on and who can you go against, and that adds a lot of value."
>
> — WASHINGTON COMMANDERS HEAD COACH DAN QUINN

*from page 23*

and Osa Odighizuwa of the Dallas Cowboys with 10.

It's simple geometry, and it rings true. If you have interior defensive linemen with the ability to get past blockers with their physical abilities, you are more predisposed to create pressure on those quick-game throws, while your edge defenders are trying to keep up.

## WREAKING HAVOC FROM EVERY GAP

Another reason interior defensive linemen are so important now is the increasing need for gap versatility. It's the rare pass-rusher who does his thing from one spot all season; more often, you'll see quarterback disruptors do their thing from a couple different gaps or more in the same drive. And the NFL's most creative defensive coaches, who are already more than conversant with these ideas with the players they already have, are quite excited about the potential to take prospects in this loaded IDL class and put them to work with what they've already seen.

"The creativity part, I think that's what I see most in this group," Washington Commanders head coach Dan Quinn told *Athlon Sports* at the NFL Scouting Combine. "Here are the big ends who can move down. Here's the outside guys who can go inside. Those, to me, are things when … you want a league of matchups, and who can you work on, and who can you go against, and that adds a lot of value."

Seattle Seahawks head coach Mike Macdonald agrees.

"I don't think you're just targeting, hey, we need this specific position," Macdonald told me a bit later. "But how quickly they affect the quarterback, how they dictate protections, things like that. Hey, I want to start winning these schemes where now they're consistently accounting for me in the pass rush. It's our job as coaches to keep giving them advantageous opportunities to rush the quarterback. The common thread there, those are heckuva football players. They're really tough and really smart and play the game the right way, and it's our job as coaches to kind of make it come to life."

Michigan's Mason Graham, selected fifth overall by the Cleveland Browns, lined up head over or to one side of the center 29% of the time last season, either over or outside the guard 60% of the time and either over or outside the tackles 11% of the time. Kenneth Grant, Graham's former linemate with the Wolverines, went 13th overall to the Miami Dolphins. Last season, Grant (who outweighed Graham by 35 pounds at 331 to 296 at the NFL Scouting Combine) spent 57% of his snaps beating up opposing centers and guards as an inside double-team soaker, but the rest of his time as a more aggressive 3-technique tackle, using his unusual agility to scream through gaps to the ball-carrier.

"I feel like the combination — he's a bigger dude, obviously he plays 0-technique and 3-techniques, but we're both very athletic players, and I feel like we work well with each other," Graham told *Athlon Sports* when asked how it was to work with Grant. "Having two big guys that are dominant inside, I feel like we help each other, and I feel like he's an awesome player."

Then there's how you fit all those different types of talent into your fronts. There's a lot more to it than putting a big guy in a gap and telling him to hunt the quarterback.

"You start with what their measurables are," Buffalo Bills general manager Brandon Beane told *Athlon Sports* about the requirements for evaluating multi-gap defensive line prospects. "What does this guy look like? What are his features, arm length, size? What does he do best? Is he best as a rusher? Like, is this a guy you want to line up in a 3-tech role and get a one-on-one against a guard? Is this guy just a power, straight-up ass-kicker? He's going to walk his guy back into the pocket. Maybe he's not going to flip his hips, but he's going to condense the pock-

JAMES LANG-IMAGN IMAGES

> "The four-man rush was key. We were getting pressure and collapsing the pocket. I was just in coverage, and I'm looking at the pocket just shrink on them, and the guys were eating up front for sure. With the guys we have, it's always enough."
>
> — EAGLES LINEBACKER ZACK BAUN

et and push the guard or the center into the quarterback's lap.

"You want different pieces for different guys. You don't want to always just be able to have run-stuffers and nobody who can get to the quarterback. And you can't just have a slew of guys that can't stop the run when it's December, it's cold, it's snowing and guys are just going to line up in the backfield. So, we want to be versatile with our skill sets and be able to attack in as many different ways as we can."

Which is really the name of the game when it comes to maximizing your interior defensive linemen.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE

When Buddy Ryan put together the Chicago Bears defenses that peaked in 1985 with perhaps the greatest defense in football history, one of his primary constructs was the "Bear Front." This was a five-man front with a nose tackle's head over the center, two larger defensive ends deployed as defensive tackles to the guards' outside shoulders and two faster edge defenders outside the tackles. The main idea was to force single-team blocks inside, because the center had to deal with the nose tackle in the middle of the line, and the guards couldn't help because they were each dealing with tackles to their outside alignments.

Last season, NFL defenses lined up in five-man fronts on 810 snaps. Five years before, in 2019, they did so 629 times. A few years before, in 2016, they did so 464 times. Five-man fronts are becoming more popular, and for the same reasons now that existed back in Ryan's day. When you have more defensive fronts in which there are three interior defensive linemen to two edge defenders … well, again, the math is clear, as is the value.

## MAKE WAY FOR THE STUNTMEN

Line stunts, in which one lineman acts as the looper to set up another lineman as the penetrator to the pocket, have also increased in number and importance in recent years. There were 6,236 stunts in the 2024 season, and of those, 1,242 — a full 20% — were stunts in which the interior defensive linemen were the only ones doing the stunting, while the edge defenders were going after the quarterback in more traditional ways.

Since we began this article with the defending Super Bowl champion Eagles, let's end there as well. The Eagles didn't blitz the Chiefs once in Super Bowl LIX, but they did send 11 stunts after Mahomes. And against those 11 stunts, Mahomes completed 2-of-5 passes for 17 yards, two sacks, one offensive holding penalty, one interception returned for a touchdown and three quarterback scrambles. More often than not, it was Philadelphia's interior defensive linemen who were the tone-setters for the whole operation.

"The four-man rush was key," All-Pro linebacker Zack Baun said right after the Super Bowl win. "We were getting pressure and collapsing the pocket. I was just in coverage, and I'm looking at the pocket just shrink on them, and the guys were eating up front for sure. With the guys we have, it's always enough."

It's not just that the Eagles have more advanced plans for their interior defensive linemen, to their great benefit — it's that the entire NFL sees the big men in the middle as true difference-makers more than ever before.

*All advanced metrics courtesy of Pro Football Focus and Sports Info Solutions.*

JUNFU HAN

# 4TH-AND-GO!

## AGGRESSION IS REPLACING CAUTION ON 4TH DOWN

**BY CRAIG ELLENPORT**

Detroit Lions head coach Dan Campbell has developed such a reputation for keeping his offense on the field in fourth-down situations that even his wife has fed into the narrative.

Campbell, who famously drinks a lot of coffee, went viral last season when he saved one of his cups of coffee from spilling. That immediately got someone on social media to inquire: Is there anything that Dan Campbell can't do?

To which Holly Campbell replied: "Yes. Punt."

Since 2021, his first season with Detroit, Campbell's Lions have gone for it on 151 fourth downs, the most in the NFL during that span. The Lions have had a better than 50% conversion rate in each season, topping out at 67% in 2024.

Campbell's Lions went for it 33 times in 2024, fourth in the league behind the Cleveland Browns, Chicago Bears and New York Giants. Of course, those three teams were a combined 11-40 last year — they were going for it out of desperation. For the Lions, who went 15-2 in 2024, it was more about aggression.

"I do think it helps," Campbell said at the end of last season. "And I do think our guys, for the most part, look at it as it's just the next down as opposed to, 'This is do or die, this is the last chance, if we don't get this…' That's not how they look at it. They look at it as, 'Well, this is the next down. That was third down, this was fourth down. What's the difference?'"

Campbell's players have come to expect it, and that's a good thing.

"They've figured out a little bit of who I am over time now," he said. "This didn't just pop up, so I think they have a pretty good grasp of when we're going to do it, when we're not. Some games we go in saying that we're going to be more aggressive than others. Sometimes it just flows that way."

Although Campbell might be the poster child for going for it on fourth down, he hasn't cornered the market. This has become a league-wide trend.

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Coincidentally or not, the four years that Campbell has been with Detroit represent a four-year stretch with the most fourth-down attempts across the league. There were 766 fourth-down attempts last season — an average of 24 per team. More notably, the success rate was 56.8%, an all-time high.

Of course, one reason for the fourth-down trend is the success of the "Tush Push." The Philadelphia Eagles, originators of the Tush Push, went for it on fourth down 27 times last season with a success rate of 70.4%.

Going for it becomes more appealing when the offense reaches what NFL Network analyst Steve Mariucci calls the "big red zone" — not inside the 20-yard line, but inside the 50, looking at a very long field-goal attempt.

"Let's say it's fourth-and-6," says Mariucci, who had to make such decisions during his nine years as an NFL head coach with the San Francisco 49ers and Detroit Lions. "Our chances are like 12% to make the field goal, right? And if we punt it, what's the best thing we can do? Yeah, we can land it on the 5-yard line. But you can also put it in there for a touchback. And then the net gain is what, a net punt of 20?

"So let's just go for it, because we have a 50-50 chance of making this thing. And so the big red zone — from, say, the 30-, 35-yard line out to midfield — that's an area where there's a huge uptick in going for it on fourth down. Because if you don't make it, it's not drastic."

Teams are also looking more and more at the analytics, trying to figure out what their chances of success are based on the exact down-and-distance. Mariucci says he can appreciate what the analytics say — but that it still comes down to a gut feeling.

"You've got to remember, they're analytics based on past statistics and past success rates," he says. "So what's the conversion rate on fourth-and-5? You know, that's one thing. But coaches have to take into account a lot of other things on the day of the game, in the moment. What's the weather like? Who's playing for you? Do you have a left guard that is injured? You know what I mean? To take a third-party stat, so-called analytics, and say, 'I'm going to believe it because the success rate on this situation is 68% and gives us a better chance to win,' that's great. But coaches still need a gut feel to try to make a common-sense decision."

DAN Campbell's
SOUP RECIPE
CALLS FOR
BIG BALLS

DAVID REGINEK-USA TODAY SPORTS

Years before "analytics" was the key buzzword and before Campbell became the league's fourth-down fanatic, another coach built a reputation for gambling on fourth down. During his nine years as head coach of the Carolina Panthers (2011-19), Ron Rivera became lovingly known as "Riverboat Ron" (although he initially preferred "Calculated Risk-Taker Ron").

It was a nickname Rivera eventually came to embrace. And he proudly notes that it's a philosophy he learned not from analytics but from a Hall of Fame coach.

"My answer to the fourth down (decisions) came from conversations with John Madden," says Rivera, who also coached the Washington Commanders from 2020-23 and earlier this year became general manager of his alma mater, Cal.

Rivera was more conservative when he first became a head coach. If the Panthers were up by three and facing a fourth down in field-goal range, Rivera was more apt to settle for the field goal, knowing he could still lose if the opponent scored a touchdown.

"Madden said, 'You know, the thing about kicking field goals versus going for it on fourth down is, you can close the game out,'" says Rivera. "If you don't convert, and you're up by three ... the opponent still has to get into field-goal range to score to tie it. And their mentality is not necessarily score a touchdown, it's just be safe, be smart, get into field-goal position."

Were Rivera's bold moves based on analytics? "No, no, all based on your gut, your feel," he says, recalling Madden's advice. "He said to me, 'Ron, you've played enough football, you've coached enough football to know better. To know when the right time is.' He said there's an instinct that you can't … pick up off of numbers."

Rivera does say that analytics provide a good excuse for going with your gut. Since the analytics are telling coaches to go for it more often, they can lean on the analytics if things don't break the right way.

"So if you don't convert, well, it was in the numbers!" he says, laughing. "It was in the numbers. The numbers said you're supposed to go.

"But see, what the numbers never tell you is what happens if you don't succeed. You know what I'm saying? They said, well, it's a 94% chance that it's going to increase your opportunities to win. Okay. What is it if you don't convert? You know what I'm saying? Are we giving all the information to the people that are doing it?"

By all accounts, teams are giving their coaches all the information they need. Most if not all teams have analytics departments fueling these decisions.

"We see coaches becoming much more aggressive on fourth down year over year, and it has no signs of slowing down," former Atlanta Falcons general manager Thomas Dimitroff told the *Washington Post* last season. Dimitroff runs football analytics company SumerSports, which provides data-driven analysis to pro and college teams. "The increase in passing frequency, the increase in play-action usage, the fourth-down aggression and the choices to go for two-point conversions can all be tied back to the analytics movement."

Another reason fourth-down attempts have been on the rise has to do with the new dynamic kickoff rule that was imposed last season — and a new tweak to that rule for 2025 likely will put even more emphasis on this trend. The average starting position after a kickoff used to be around the 25-yard line. Last season, with the dynamic kickoff, it was around the 30. Newly implemented for 2025, a touchback on kickoffs will be placed at the 35-yard line. In other words, teams will be starting their drives maybe two first downs shy of field-goal range.

So never mind about the "big red zone" — let's say you're inside the opponent's 10-yard line. Let's say it's fourth-and-goal from the 4-yard line. Not as easy as a QB sneak, but …

"If I kick a field goal, okay," says Fox Sports analyst Greg Olsen. "Then I kick off, they might start at the 35, or more. It's not as favorable to me. Even if I fail on fourth down, they are on the … 4-yard line. The odds actually tell me I'm more likely to score next even though I don't possess the ball."

Clearly, it makes more sense for a team with a strong offense to go for it than it does for a team with a poor offense. Not surprisingly, the most successful fourth-down teams last season were predominantly playoff teams. The Washington Commanders had the best success rate at 87% (converting 20-of-23 attempts), followed by the Buffalo Bills (72.7%), Kansas City Chiefs (70.6%), Philadelphia Eagles (70.4%) and Denver Broncos (68.2%). In all, 10 of the top 11 teams in fourth-down success rate were playoff teams. Of the eight teams that converted less than 50% of their fourth-down attempts, six had losing records.

Of course, one of the greatest coaches in NFL history is credited with perhaps the most widely criticized fourth-down decision ever made. It was a classic Sunday night game in 2009 between Tom Brady's New England Patriots and Peyton Manning's Indianapolis Colts. The Patriots, clinging to a six-point lead with just over two minutes left to play, faced fourth-and-2 from their own 28-yard line. Bill Belichick opted to go for it.

Brady's fourth-down pass was only good for one yard, and the Colts took over at the 29. Four plays later, Manning found Reggie Wayne for the winning score. "I thought it was our best chance to win," Belichick said the next day. "I thought we needed to make that one play and then we could basically run out the clock. We weren't able to make it."

Belichick's defense might have taken that decision personally, but not everyone disagreed with the move. Manning had been unstoppable throughout the fourth quarter of that game, so the situation called for extreme measures.

Campbell's fourth-down decisions are usually meant to put the opposition on its heels. His reputation is actually something Detroit's opponents need to prepare for.

"I do think there is some of that, where teams know coming in that they may need to be more aggressive because of the fact that we're going to be," Campbell says. "I also know that there are plenty of coaches that are telling their guys, 'Look, he's going to mess this up. That head coach over there is going to make a decision that's going to cost their team, and we'll just stay true to what we do.' And you can't argue with that either. There's no right or wrong to it, in my opinion, I just know my right."

Yet another reason for the uptick in fourth-down attempts is, quite simply, the acceptance of the idea.

"The incredulousness with which some fourth-down go-for-it decisions are received by announcers, a lot of that has gone away," says Ben Baldwin, creator of the "Fourth Down Decision Bot," a program that analyzes all fourth-down attempts. "For the most part, Troy Aikman and Cris Collinsworth and Greg Olsen, all of those guys understand what teams are doing in going for it. You're not as likely to hear criticism for going for it on fourth down as you would 10 years ago."

Regardless of the reason, more fourth-down attempts are good for football. Perhaps the only people who don't want to see it are punters. Lions punter Jack Fox had a career-low 45 punts last season.

See — Campbell can punt. He just doesn't like to.

## ON THE GO

Michael Lopez, the NFL's senior director of football data and analytics, has compiled the "go-for-it rate" for fourth-and-1, fourth-and-2 and fourth-and-3 situations over the past 15 seasons. Not surprisingly, 2024 featured the highest go-for-it rate for all three down-and-distance situations:

→ **FOURTH-AND-1:** Ten years ago, teams went for it on fourth-and-1 40.4% of the time. In 2024, teams went for it 69.7% of the time.

→ **FOURTH-AND-2:** Ten years ago, teams went for it on fourth-and-2 14.5% of the time. In 2024, that number ballooned to 40.7%.

→ **FOURTH-AND-3:** Ten years ago, teams went for it on fourth-and-3 just 11.0% of the time. In 2024, that number was 31.6%.

## 2025

# DRAFT RECAP

## NFL DRAFT PICKS

### ROUND 1

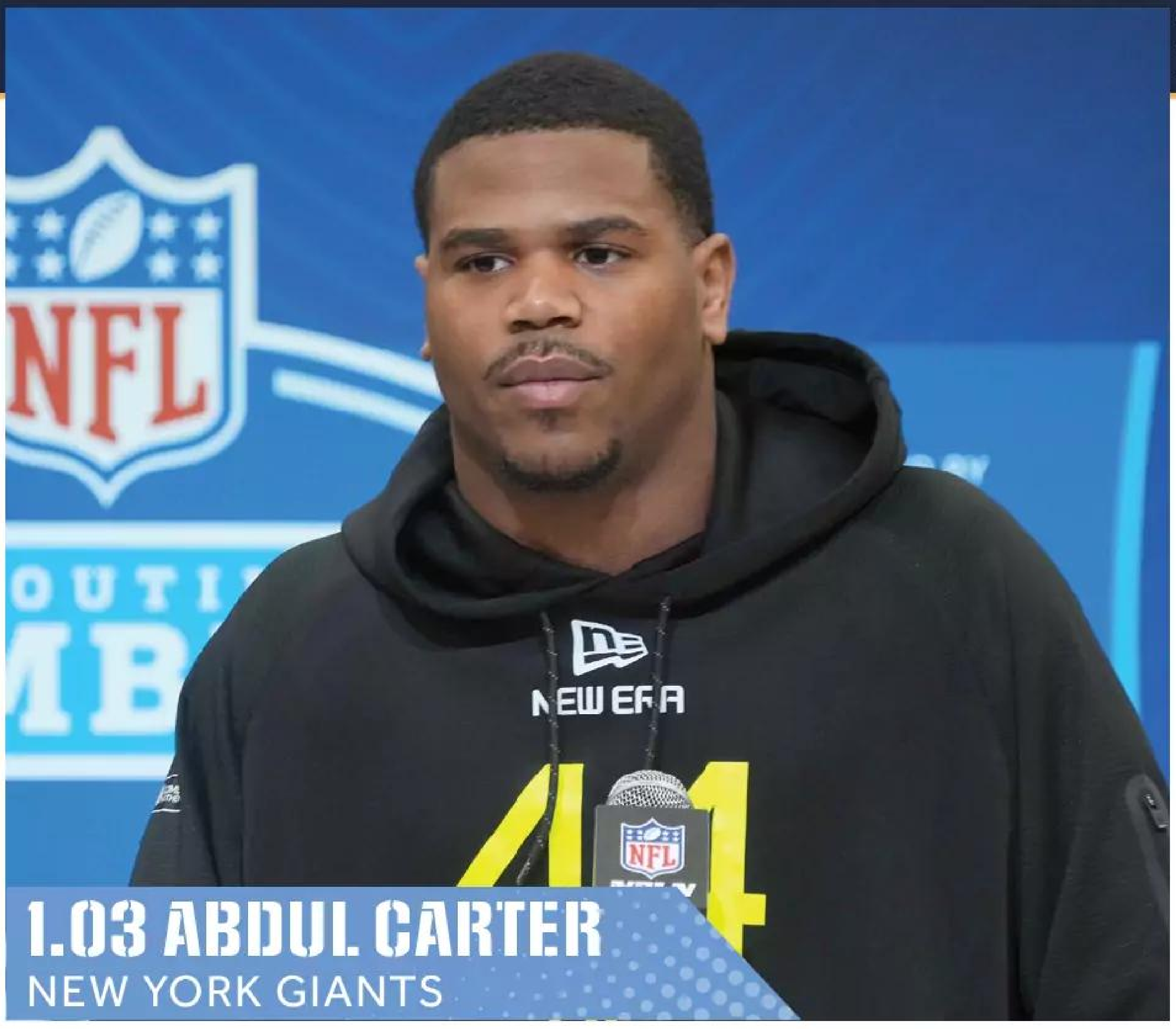
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Titans | Cam Ward | QB | Miami (Fla.) |
| 2 | Jaguars | Travis Hunter | WR/CB | Colorado |
| 3 | Giants | Abdul Carter | Edge | Penn State |
| 4 | Patriots | Will Campbell | OT | LSU |
| 5 | Browns | Mason Graham | DT | Michigan |
| 6 | Raiders | Ashton Jeanty | RB | Boise State |
| 7 | Jets | Armand Membou | OT | Missouri |
| 8 | Panthers | Tetairoa McMillan | WR | Arizona |
| 9 | Saints | Kelvin Banks Jr. | OT | Texas |
| 10 | Bears | Colston Loveland | TE | Michigan |
| 11 | 49ers | Mykel Williams | Edge | Georgia |
| 12 | Cowboys | Tyler Booker | G | Alabama |
| 13 | Dolphins | Kenneth Grant | DT | Michigan |
| 14 | Colts | Tyler Warren | TE | Penn State |
| 15 | Falcons | Jalon Walker | LB | Georgia |
| 16 | Cardinals | Walter Nolen III | DT | Ole Miss |
| 17 | Bengals | Shemar Stewart | Edge | Texas A&M |
| 18 | Seahawks | Grey Zabel | G | North Dakota St. |
| 19 | Buccaneers | Emeka Egbuka | WR | Ohio State |
| 20 | Broncos | Jahdae Barron | CB | Texas |
| 21 | Steelers | Derrick Harmon | DT | Oregon |
| 22 | Chargers | Omarion Hampton | RB | North Carolina |
| 23 | Packers | Matthew Golden | WR | Texas |
| 24 | Vikings | Donovan Jackson | OG | Ohio State |
| 25 | Giants | Jaxson Dart | QB | Ole Miss |
| 26 | Falcons | James Pearce Jr. | Edge | Tennessee |
| 27 | Ravens | Malaki Starks | S | Georgia |
| 28 | Lions | Tyleik Williams | DT | Ohio State |
| 29 | Commanders | Josh Conerly Jr. | OT | Oregon |
| 30 | Bills | Maxwell Hairston | CB | Kentucky |
| 31 | Eagles | Jihaad Campbell | LB | Alabama |
| 32 | Chiefs | Josh Simmons | OT | Ohio State |

**1.01 CAM WARD**
TENNESSEE

**1.02 TRAVIS HUNTER**
JACKSONVILLE

## ROUND 2

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Browns | Carson Schwesinger | LB | UCLA |
| 34 | Texans | Jayden Higgins | WR | Iowa State |
| 35 | Seahawks | Nick Emmanwori | S | South Carolina |
| 36 | Browns | Quinshon Judkins | RB | Ohio State |
| 37 | Dolphins | Jonah Savaiinaea | G | Arizona |
| 38 | Patriots | TreVeyon Henderson | RB | Ohio State |
| 39 | Bears | Luther Burden III | WR | Missouri |
| 40 | Saints | Tyler Shough | QB | Louisville |
| 41 | Bills | T.J. Sanders | DT | South Carolina |
| 42 | Jets | Mason Taylor | TE | LSU |
| 43 | 49ers | Alfred Collins | DT | Texas |
| 44 | Cowboys | Donovan Ezeiruaku | Edge | Boston College |
| 45 | Colts | JT Tuimoloau | Edge | Ohio State |
| 46 | Rams | Terrance Ferguson | TE | Oregon |
| 47 | Cardinals | Will Johnson | CB | Michigan |
| 48 | Texans | Aireontae Ersery | OT | Minnesota |
| 49 | Bengals | Demetrius Knight Jr. | LB | South Carolina |
| 50 | Seahawks | Elijah Arroyo | TE | Miami (Fla.) |
| 51 | Panthers | Nic Scourton | Edge | Texas A&M |
| 52 | Titans | Oluwafemi Oladejo | Edge | UCLA |
| 53 | Buccaneers | Benjamin Morrison | CB | Notre Dame |
| 54 | Packers | Anthony Belton | OT | NC State |
| 55 | Chargers | Tre Harris | WR | Ole Miss |
| 56 | Bears | Ozzy Trapilo | OT | Boston College |
| 57 | Lions | Tate Ratledge | G | Georgia |
| 58 | Raiders | Jack Bech | WR | TCU |
| 59 | Ravens | Mike Green | Edge | Marshall |
| 60 | Broncos | RJ Harvey | RB | UCF |
| 61 | Commanders | Trey Amos | CB | Ole Miss |
| 62 | Bears | Shemar Turner | DT | Texas A&M |
| 63 | Chiefs | Omarr Norman-Lott | DT | Tennessee |
| 64 | Eagles | Andrew Mukuba | S | Texas |



**1.03 ABDUL CARTER**
NEW YORK GIANTS

## ROUND 3

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Giants | Darius Alexander | DT | Toledo |
| 66 | Chiefs | Ashton Gillotte | Edge | Louisville |
| 67 | Browns | Harold Fannin Jr. | TE | Bowling Green |
| 68 | Raiders | Darien Porter | CB | Iowa State |
| 69 | Patriots | Kyle Williams | WR | Washington State |
| 70 | Lions | Isaac TeSlaa | WR | Arkansas |
| 71 | Saints | Vernon Broughton | DT | Texas |
| 72 | Bills | Landon Jackson | Edge | Arkansas |
| 73 | Jets | Azareye'h Thomas | CB | Florida State |
| 74 | Broncos | Pat Bryant | WR | Illinois |
| 75 | 49ers | Nick Martin | LB | Oklahoma State |
| 76 | Cowboys | Shavon Revel Jr. | CB | East Carolina |
| 77 | Panthers | Princely Umanmielen | Edge | Ole Miss |
| 78 | Cardinals | Jordan Burch | Edge | Oregon |
| 79 | Texans | Jaylin Noel | WR | Iowa State |
| 80 | Colts | Justin Walley | CB | Minnesota |
| 81 | Bengals | Dylan Fairchild | G | Georgia |
| 82 | Titans | Kevin Winston Jr. | S | Penn State |
| 83 | Steelers | Kaleb Johnson | RB | Iowa |
| 84 | Buccaneers | Jacob Parrish | CB | Kansas State |
| 85 | Chiefs | Nohl Williams | CB | Cal |
| 86 | Chargers | Jamaree Caldwell | DT | Oregon |
| 87 | Packers | Savion Williams | WR | TCU |
| 88 | Jaguars | Caleb Ransaw | CB | Tulane |
| 89 | Jaguars | Wyatt Milum | G | West Virginia |
| 90 | Rams | Josaiah Stewart | Edge | Michigan |
| 91 | Ravens | Emery Jones Jr. | OT | LSU |
| 92 | Seahawks | Jalen Milroe | QB | Alabama |
| 93 | Saints | Jonas Sanker | S | Virginia |
| 94 | Browns | Dillon Gabriel | QB | Oregon |
| 95 | Patriots | Jared Wilson | C | Georgia |
| 96 | Falcons | Xavier Watts | S | Notre Dame |
| 97 | Texans | Jaylin Smith | CB | USC |
| 98 | Raiders | Caleb Rogers | OT | Texas Tech |
| 99 | Raiders | Charles Grant | OT | William & Mary |
| 100 | 49ers | Upton Stout | CB | WKU |
| 101 | Broncos | Sai'vion Jones | Edge | LSU |
| 102 | Vikings | Tai Felton | WR | Maryland |

OPPOSITE: JASEN VINLOVE-IMAGN IMAGES; FROM LEFT: DOUG ENGLE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION; KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

**1.04 WILL CAMPBELL**
NEW ENGLAND

**1.05 MASON GRAHAM**
CLEVELAND

## ROUND 4

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 103 | Titans | Chimere Dike | WR | Florida |
| 104 | Jaguars | Bhayshul Tuten | RB | Virginia Tech |
| 105 | Giants | Cam Skattebo | RB | Arizona State |
| 106 | Patriots | Craig Woodson | S | Cal |
| 107 | Jaguars | Jack Kiser | LB | Notre Dame |
| 108 | Raiders | Dont'e Thornton Jr. | WR | Tennessee |
| 109 | Bills | Deone Walker | DT | Kentucky |
| 110 | Jets | Arian Smith | WR | Georgia |
| 111 | Eagles | Ty Robinson | DT | Nebraska |
| 112 | Saints | Danny Stutsman | LB | Oklahoma |
| 113 | 49ers | C.J. West | DT | Indiana |
| 114 | Panthers | Trevor Etienne | RB | Georgia |
| 115 | Cardinals | Cody Simon | LB | Ohio State |
| 116 | Texans | Woody Marks | RB | USC |
| 117 | Rams | Jarquez Hunter | RB | Auburn |
| 118 | Falcons | Billy Bowman Jr. | S | Oklahoma |
| 119 | Bengals | Barrett Carter | LB | Clemson |
| 120 | Titans | Gunnar Helm | TE | Texas |
| 121 | Buccaneers | David Walker | Edge | Central Arkansas |
| 122 | Panthers | Lathan Ransom | S | Ohio State |
| 123 | Steelers | Jack Sawyer | Edge | Ohio State |
| 124 | Packers | Barryn Sorrell | Edge | Texas |
| 125 | Chargers | Kyle Kennard | Edge | South Carolina |
| 126 | Browns | Dylan Sampson | RB | Tennessee |
| 127 | Colts | Jalen Travis | OT | Iowa State |
| 128 | Commanders | Jaylin Lane | WR | Virginia Tech |
| 129 | Ravens | Teddye Buchanan | LB | Cal |
| 130 | Jets | Malachi Moore | S | Alabama |
| 131 | Saints | Quincy Riley | CB | Louisville |
| 132 | Bears | Ruben Hyppolite II | LB | Maryland |
| 133 | Chiefs | Jalen Royals | WR | Utah State |
| 134 | Broncos | Que Robinson | Edge | Alabama |
| 135 | Raiders | Tonka Hemingway | DT | South Carolina |
| 136 | Titans | Elic Ayomanor | WR | Stanford |
| 137 | Patriots | Joshua Farmer | DT | Florida State |
| 138 | 49ers | Jordan Watkins | WR | Ole Miss |

## ROUND 5

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 139 | Vikings | Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins | Edge | Georgia |
| 140 | Panthers | Cam Jackson | DT | Florida |
| 141 | Ravens | Carson Vinson | OT | Alabama A&M |
| 142 | Seahawks | Rylie Mills | DT | Notre Dame |
| 143 | Dolphins | Jordan Phillips | DT | Maryland |
| 144 | Browns | Shedeur Sanders | QB | Colorado |
| 145 | Eagles | Mac McWilliams | CB | UCF |
| 146 | Patriots | Bradyn Swinson | Edge | LSU |
| 147 | 49ers | Jordan James | RB | Oregon |
| 148 | Rams | Ty Hamilton | DT | Ohio State |
| 149 | Cowboys | Jaydon Blue | RB | Texas |
| 150 | Dolphins | Jason Marshall Jr. | CB | Florida |
| 151 | Colts | DJ Giddens | RB | Kansas State |
| 152 | Cowboys | Shemar James | LB | Florida |
| 153 | Bengals | Jalen Rivers | G | Miami (Fla.) |
| 154 | Giants | Marcus Mbow | G | Purdue |
| 155 | Dolphins | Dante Trader Jr. | S | Maryland |
| 156 | Chiefs | Jeffrey Bassa | LB | Oregon |
| 157 | Buccaneers | Elijah Roberts | Edge | SMU |
| 158 | Chargers | KeAndre Lambert-Smith | WR | Auburn |
| 159 | Packers | Collin Oliver | LB | Oklahoma State |
| 160 | 49ers | Marques Sigle | S | Kansas State |
| 161 | Eagles | Smael Mondon Jr. | LB | Georgia |
| 162 | Jets | Francisco Mauigoa | LB | Miami (Fla.) |
| 163 | Panthers | Mitchell Evans | TE | Notre Dame |
| 164 | Steelers | Yahya Black | DT | Iowa |
| 165 | Chargers | Oronde Gadsden II | TE | Syracuse |
| 166 | Seahawks | Tory Horton | WR | Colorado State |
| 167 | Titans | Jackson Slater | G | Sacramento State |
| 168 | Eagles | Drew Kendall | C | Boston College |
| 169 | Bears | Zah Frazier | CB | UTSA |
| 170 | Bills | Jordan Hancock | CB | Ohio State |
| 171 | Lions | Miles Frazier | G | LSU |
| 172 | Rams | Chris Paul Jr. | LB | Ole Miss |
| 173 | Bills | Jackson Hawes | TE | Georgia Tech |
| 174 | Cardinals | Denzel Burke | CB | Ohio State |
| 175 | Seahawks | Robbie Ouzts | TE | Alabama |
| 176 | Jets | Tyler Baron | Edge | Miami (Fla.) |

FROM LEFT: ERIC CANHA-IMAGN IMAGES; KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

**1.06 ASHTON JEANTY**
LAS VEGAS

**1.07 ARMAND MEMBOU**
NEW YORK JETS

## ROUND 6

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 177 | Bills | Dorian Strong | CB | Virginia Tech |
| 178 | Ravens | Bilhal Kone | CB | Western Michigan |
| 179 | Dolphins | Ollie Gordon II | RB | Oklahoma State |
| 180 | Raiders | JJ Pegues | DT | Ole Miss |
| 181 | Eagles | Kyle McCord | QB | Syracuse |
| 182 | Patriots | Andres Borregales | K | Miami (Fla.) |
| 183 | Titans | Marcus Harris | CB | Cal |
| 184 | Saints | Devin Neal | RB | Kansas |
| 185 | Steelers | Will Howard | QB | Ohio State |
| 186 | Ravens | Tyler Loop | K | Arizona |
| 187 | Texans | Jaylen Reed | S | Penn State |
| 188 | Titans | Kalel Mullings | RB | Michigan |
| 189 | Colts | Riley Leonard | QB | Notre Dame |
| 190 | Colts | Tim Smith | DT | Alabama |
| 191 | Eagles | Myles Hinton | OT | Michigan |
| 192 | Seahawks | Bryce Cabeldue | G | Kansas |
| 193 | Bengals | Tahj Brooks | RB | Texas Tech |
| 194 | Jaguars | Jalen McLeod | LB | Auburn |
| 195 | Bears | Luke Newman | G | Michigan State |
| 196 | Lions | Ahmed Hassanein | Edge | Boise State |
| 197 | Texans | Graham Mertz | QB | Florida |
| 198 | Packers | Warren Brinson | DT | Georgia |
| 199 | Chargers | Branson Taylor | OT | Pitt |
| 200 | Jaguars | Rayuan Lane III | S | Navy |
| 201 | Vikings | Kobe King | LB | Penn State |
| 202 | Vikings | Gavin Bartholomew | TE | Pitt |
| 203 | Ravens | LaJohntay Wester | WR | Colorado |
| 204 | Cowboys | Ajani Cornelius | OT | Oregon |
| 205 | Commanders | Kain Medrano | LB | UCLA |
| 206 | Bills | Chase Lundt | OT | UConn |
| 207 | Eagles | Cameron Williams | OT | Texas |
| 208 | Panthers | Jimmy Horn Jr. | WR | Colorado |
| 209 | Eagles | Antwaun Powell-Ryland | Edge | Virginia Tech |
| 210 | Ravens | Aeneas Peebles | DT | Virginia Tech |
| 211 | Cardinals | Hayden Conner | G | Texas |
| 212 | Ravens | Robert Longerbeam | CB | Rutgers |
| 213 | Raiders | Tommy Mellott | WR | Montana State |
| 214 | Chargers | RJ Mickens | S | Clemson |
| 215 | Raiders | Cam Miller | QB | North Dakota State |
| 216 | Broncos | Jeremy Crawshaw | P | Florida |

## ROUND 7

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 217 | Cowboys | Jay Toia | DT | UCLA |
| 218 | Falcons | Jack Nelson | OT | Wisconsin |
| 219 | Giants | Thomas Fidone II | TE | Nebraska |
| 220 | Patriots | Marcus Bryant | OT | Missouri |
| 221 | Jaguars | Jonah Monheim | C | USC |
| 222 | Raiders | Cody Lindenberg | LB | Minnesota |
| 223 | Seahawks | Damien Martinez | RB | Miami (Fla.) |
| 224 | Texans | Kyonte Hamilton | DT | Rutgers |
| 225 | Cardinals | Kitan Crawford | S | Nevada |
| 226 | Steelers | Carson Bruener | LB | Washington |
| 227 | 49ers | Kurtis Rourke | QB | Indiana |
| 228 | Chiefs | Brashard Smith | RB | SMU |
| 229 | Steelers | Donte Kent | CB | Central Michigan |
| 230 | Lions | Dan Jackson | S | Georgia |
| 231 | Dolphins | Quinn Ewers | QB | Texas |
| 232 | Colts | Hunter Wohler | LB | Wisconsin |
| 233 | Bears | Kyle Monangai | RB | Rutgers |
| 234 | Seahawks | Mason Richman | OT | Iowa |
| 235 | Buccaneers | Tez Johnson | WR | Oregon |
| 236 | Jaguars | LeQuint Allen | RB | Syracuse |
| 237 | Packers | Micah Robinson | CB | Tulane |
| 238 | Seahawks | Ricky White III | WR | UNLV |
| 239 | Cowboys | Phil Mafah | RB | Clemson |
| 240 | Bills | Kaden Prather | WR | Maryland |
| 241 | Broncos | Caleb Lohner | TE | Utah |
| 242 | Rams | Konata Mumpfield | WR | Pitt |
| 243 | Ravens | Garrett Dellinger | G | LSU |
| 244 | Lions | Dominic Lovett | WR | Georgia |
| 245 | Commanders | Jacory Croskey-Merritt | RB | Arizona |
| 246 | Giants | Korie Black | CB | Oklahoma State |
| 247 | Cowboys | Tommy Akingbesote | DT | Maryland |
| 248 | Saints | Moliki Matavao | TE | UCLA |
| 249 | 49ers | Connor Colby | G | Iowa |
| 250 | Packers | John Williams | G | Cincinnati |
| 251 | Patriots | Julian Ashby | LS | Vanderbilt |
| 252 | 49ers | Junior Bergen | WR | Montana |
| 253 | Dolphins | Zeek Biggers | DT | Georgia Tech |
| 254 | Saints | Fadil Diggs | Edge | Syracuse |
| 255 | Texans | Luke Lachey | TE | Iowa |
| 256 | Chargers | Trikweze Bridges | CB | Florida |
| 257 | Patriots | Kobee Minor | CB | Memphis |

FROM LEFT: CANDICE WARD-IMAGN IMAGES;

BUD LIGHT
DRAFT 2025
BUD LIGHT
BUD LIGHT
DALLAS COWBOYS
NFL DRAFT 2025
DALLAS COWBOYS
AMERICA'S TEAM
AMERICA'S TEAM

TORK MASON/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

# 2025 NFL DRAFT

## TITLETOWN TURNS INTO DRAFT CITY

Ever since the NFL turned its marquee offseason event into a travelling road show back in 2015, cities across the country have been spending plenty of time, effort and money on making their edition of the NFL Draft into something unique, well beyond the gathering of future Pro Bowlers.

When it came to the 2025 edition, “unique” was certainly a buzzword, as the draft’s massive cottage industry descended upon the NFL’s smallest franchise home — Green Bay, Wisconsin. While Green Bay can be a challenge to get to on a decent fall day, it was remarkably impressive to see that more than 600,000 people made the trek to Titletown to hear names being read off cards and to celebrate the latest influx of college talent.

Naturally, iconic Lambeau Field took center stage, with sweeping vistas of the venue helping frame the traditional draft stage and the throngs of attendees who spilled out over nearly every inch of the setup nestled into the surrounding neighborhood. The red carpet runup to the first round added to the ambiance, and there were cheeseheads of every size imaginable in just about every direction you could turn.

Fans were so eager to take in the sights that some were even turned away on Day 1 due to capacity restrictions — 2025 was the second-most attended draft in history. They watched at home in droves, too, with the event becoming the second-most-watched draft of all time, trailing only the 2020 edition, which had its own special circumstances (the COVID-19 lockdown) contributing to the audience size.

When Green Bay was first announced as the host of the 2025 draft, skepticism ran high over just how well the city would be able to pull it off given its size and location. After seeing what took place in late April, though, it’s hard to think that this year’s event was anything but a smashing success.

## SHEDEUR’S SLIDE

While the NFL Draft can sometimes reach a broader audience beyond the hard-core fans who live and die with every pick, this year there was one storyline that seemed to resonate more intently with every trip commissioner Roger Goodell made to the podium: the three-day slide of Colorado quarterback Shedeur Sanders.

If you had taken a look at any mock draft before teams were put on the clock in Green Bay, chances are high you would have seen Sanders’ name somewhere in the first round, with a select few thinking he was more of a second-rounder. While there were some questions about his fit and overall ceiling, it was a widely held belief among evaluators that

Sanders was one of the most NFL-ready signal-callers available.

But then the draft actually happened. The Tennessee Titans, as they had telegraphed for more than a month, took Miami (Fla.) star Cam Ward No. 1 overall as their new franchise signal-caller. After the Pittsburgh Steelers passed on Sanders, many were left wondering where he would wind up, especially after the New York Giants traded back into the first round to snag Ole Miss quarterback Jaxson Dart.

**SHEDEUR SANDERS**
CLEVELAND

Once the New Orleans Saints took Louisville's Tyler Shough early on Day 2, however — marking the first time since 1971 (Archie Manning) that the Saints had used a first- or second-round pick on a quarterback — the Sanders Slide was officially on. It didn't help that he very publicly was prank-called, as a slew of social media commenters ran wild upon seeing him get false hope courtesy of some jokesters. The cringe was compounded by the slew of draft broadcasts that kept speculating on how far he would fall and what team would end the humiliation.

To really twist the knife into the Sanders camp, the Seattle Seahawks took a developmental flier on Alabama dual-threat Jalen Milroe, and the Cleveland Browns nabbed Oregon quarterback Dillon Gabriel late in the third round to officially send Sanders to Day 3.

After the fourth round came and went without another QB being taken, the Browns surprisingly traded up in the fifth round to halt the slide at pick No. 144 overall — a far cry from where just about everybody connected to the process had him going.

While the draft will be only one part of the story for all of the 13 quarterbacks selected, there's no denying that the dominant topic of discussion surrounding this year's event was Sanders' fall from a potential first-rounder all the way to a fifth-round pick, putting him in a very crowded quarterback room in Cleveland.

FROM LEFT: TROY TAORMINA-IMAGN IMAGES; KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

**TRAVIS HUNTER**
JACKSONVILLE

## TRADING UP FOR TRAVIS

As much as the first pick of the first round came and went with barely a ripple, the second pick was where it felt like the draft truly began.

There was some speculation that the Browns could take Sanders in that spot, but that notion was quickly tossed to the side once the Jacksonville Jaguars traded up from the No. 5 overall selection by handing over their first-, second- and fourth-round selections and a 2026 first-rounder to Cleveland to land the No. 2 pick and a pair of Day 3 selections. The player they wanted wasn't a quarterback, though, but a true unicorn in Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter.

It was a bold move by new general manager James Gladstone, considering that the franchise had barely been connected to Hunter in the pre-draft run-up (and interviewed him for only 15 minutes at the NFL Scouting Combine), but the franchise believes it has found a new star who was well worth the price paid to acquire him. It's not terribly surprising given that he was many analysts' top wide receiver available — and also the top cornerback.

At Colorado, Hunter played on both sides of the ball and regularly surpassed 100 total snaps per game. He may not come close to that level of action right away as a rookie, but it's clear that the Jaguars believe they have a special player on their hands who can help elevate the team's offense as well as its defense. As a result, Jacksonville will be worth a watch in 2025 and beyond to see just how Two-Way Travis performs over the course of a career that already looks to be one of a kind.

## POWER 2 GAP GROWS

There's an obvious gap in college football when it comes to the SEC and Big Ten compared to the rest of the FBS. This year's NFL Draft further confirmed that distinction, as both leagues shattered the old mark for most selections from one conference (65). While the addition of new schools via realignment played a role, 26 of the 32 first-round picks (81.2%) played in either the SEC or the Big Ten.

### 2025 DRAFT PICKS BY CONFERENCE

| | |
|---|---|
| 79 | SEC |
| 71 | BIG TEN |
| 42 | ACC |
| 31 | BIG 12 |
| 8 | FCS |
| 7 | FBS INDEPENDENTS |
| 6 | AMERICAN ATHLETIC, MOUNTAIN WEST |
| 4 | MAC |
| 1 | CONFERENCE USA, PAC-2, SUN BELT |

**ASHTON JEANTY**
LAS VEGAS

**OMARION HAMPTON**
LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

FROM LEFT: MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; BOB DONNAN-IMAGN IMAGES

## RB RENAISSANCE

The argument over positional value in the first round was a hot topic yet again, given the lack of can't-miss quarterback prospects. After Jacksonville made the first big swing in landing Hunter, the New York Giants didn't seem to bat an eyelid at doubling down on a pass-rusher in Penn State's Abdul Carter despite plenty of investment in their existing front seven.

That takes us to running back Ashton Jeanty — a terrific talent at a position many had previously come to dismiss in terms of first-round status.

But the Las Vegas Raiders regime simply couldn't resist a player who rushed for more yards after contact last season (1,970) than any other tailback did in total. The fact that he came within 27 yards of Barry Sanders' immortal single-season NCAA rushing record of 2,628 yards only further confirmed to the likes of head coach Pete Carroll and general manager John Spytek that Jeanty was worth the No. 6 overall pick.

There's little doubt that Jeanty owes a debt of gratitude to the likes of Saquon Barkley for proving (or re-proving) the value of running backs after the latter powered the Philadelphia Eagles to a Super Bowl title. In addition to Jeanty becoming the second-highest-drafted Mountain West player ever (behind Utah's Alex Smith, No. 1 overall in 2005) and the highest drafted Group of 5 player since Sauce Gardner went No. 4 overall in 2021, the brand-new Raider was the centerpiece of a renaissance at the position that was underscored by the number of running backs taken early.

The Los Angeles Chargers took UNC's Omarion Hampton at No. 22 overall to give this class two first-round running backs for only the third time in the past seven drafts. In all, teams selected six RBs on Days 1 and 2 as part of a sharp uptick over the year prior. All told, 25 running backs heard their names called — well above the average of the past few years and tied for the high-water mark at running back since the banner 2017 class had 30 drafted.

**EMEKA EGBUKA**
TAMPA BAY

# OHIO STATE'S RUN AT RECEIVER

Brian Hartline, a fourth-round pick in 2009, had a pretty solid career as a receiver for the Cleveland Browns and Miami Dolphins, but his greatest value to the league might be as the wide receivers coach at his alma mater Ohio State. Since the Canton native returned to the Buckeyes as an assistant in 2017, the school's output at the position has made it the game's preeminent wide receiver factory.

That trend continued this year, as Ohio State became the first school ever to have a wideout drafted in the first round for four straight years when the Tampa Bay Buccaneers took Emeka Egbuka with the No. 19 overall pick. Remarkably, Hartline's receivers room had, at one point in 2021, six future first-rounders competing for reps — Egbuka, Marvin Harrison Jr., Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Garrett Wilson, Chris Olave and Jameson Williams (who transferred to Alabama eventually).

With that level of talent, it's no wonder Ohio State has been so successful in recent years — and no wonder that they won the national title last season behind a future first-round receiver in Jeremiah Smith, who won't be draft-eligible until 2027. A staggering 14 of Smith's former Buckeyes teammates were taken this year, tying the second-biggest haul in one draft from a single school (with the 2004 Buckeyes and the 2020 LSU Tigers). Perennial talent pipeline Georgia holds the record with 15 in 2022.

FROM LEFT: MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; KYLE ROBERTSON/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

**TYLEIK WILLIAMS**
DETROIT

## 2025 NFL DRAFT BY SCHOOL

(min. four picks)

| | |
|---|---|
| 14 | OHIO STATE |
| 13 | GEORGIA |
| 12 | TEXAS |
| 10 | OREGON |
| 8 | OLE MISS |
| 7 | ALABAMA, FLORIDA, LSU, MIAMI (FLA.), MICHIGAN |
| 6 | MARYLAND, NOTRE DAME |
| 5 | IOWA, PENN STATE, SOUTH CAROLINA, UCLA, VIRGINIA TECH |
| 4 | ARIZONA, CAL, COLORADO, IOWA STATE, OKLAHOMA STATE, SYRACUSE, TENNESSEE |

2026 NFL

# DRAFT PROSPECTS

## QUARTERBACKS

1. **LaNORRIS SELLERS** South Carolina
2. **DREW ALLAR** Penn State
3. **ARCH MANNING** Texas
4. **CADE KLUBNIK** Clemson
5. **GARRETT NUSSMEIER** LSU

## RUNNING BACKS

1. **JEREMIYAH LOVE** Notre Dame
2. **NICHOLAS SINGLETON** Penn State
3. **MAKHI HUGHES** Oregon
4. **JUSTICE HAYNES** Michigan
5. **JAYDN OTT** Oklahoma

## WIDE RECEIVERS

1. **JORDYN TYSON** Arizona State
2. **NYCK HARBOR** South Carolina
3. **CARNELL TATE** Ohio State
4. **DENZEL BOSTON** Washington
5. **ANTONIO WILLIAMS** Clemson

## TIGHT ENDS

1. **ELI STOWERS** Vanderbilt
2. **MAX KLARE** Ohio State
3. **KENYON SADIQ** Oregon
4. **OSCAR DELP** Georgia
5. **JACK ENDRIES** Texas

## OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

1. **KADYN PROCTOR** Alabama
2. **FRANCIS MAUIGOA** Miami (Fla.)
3. **SPENCER FANO** Utah
4. **ISAIAH WORLD** Oregon
5. **CALEB LOMU** Utah

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: JEFF BLAKE-IMAGN IMAGES; CHRISTINE TANNOUS/INDYSTAR; MARK HOFFMAN/ MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL; ANDREW NELLES / THE TENNESSEAN; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

VISIT ATHLON SPORTS'
NFL DRAFT EXPERT
**LUKE EASTERLING**
FOR DAILY UPDATES AND INFORMATION

## EDGE

1. **T.J. PARKER** Clemson
2. **KELDRIC FAULK** Auburn
3. **RUEBEN BAIN JR.** Miami (Fla.)
4. **DANI DENNIS-SUTTON** Penn State
5. **MATAYO UIAGALELEI** Oregon

## DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

1. **PETER WOODS** Clemson
2. **CALEB BANKS** Florida
3. **LT OVERTON** Alabama
4. **CHRISTEN MILLER** Georgia
5. **ZXAVIAN HARRIS** Ole Miss

## LINEBACKERS

1. **ANTHONY HILL JR.** Texas
2. **DEONTAE LAWSON** Alabama
3. **SONNY STYLES** Ohio State
4. **SUNTARINE PERKINS** Ole Miss
5. **CJ ALLEN** Georgia

## CORNERBACKS

1. **JERMOD McCOY** Tennessee
2. **TACARIO DAVIS** Washington
3. **MALIK MUHAMMAD** Texas
4. **AVIEON TERRELL** Clemson
5. **A.J. HARRIS** Penn State

## SAFETIES

1. **CALEB DOWNS** Ohio State
2. **DILLON THIENEMAN** Oregon
3. **KEON SABB** Alabama
4. **KAMARI RAMSEY** USC
5. **BUD CLARK** TCU

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BOB DONNAN-IMAGN IMAGES; KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; KEN RUINARD

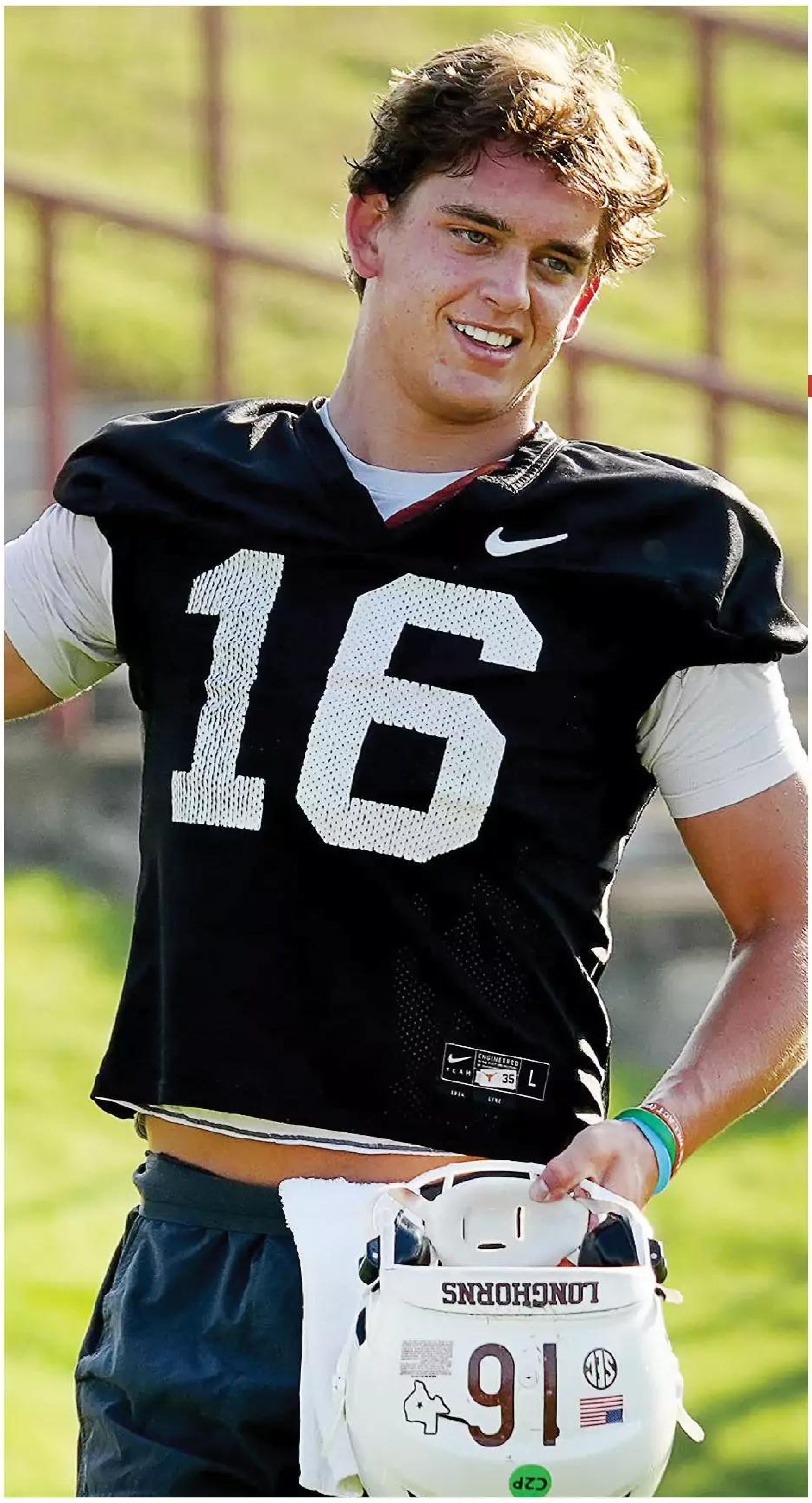
# 2026 NFL

# MOCK DRAFT

BY LUKE EASTERLING

It's never too early to look ahead to next year's draft, and considering some of the high-profile names who will be eligible, the 2026 class is already generating plenty of buzz a year in advance.

Quarterbacks will dominate the conversation surrounding this crop of top prospects, as Texas' Arch Manning, Penn State's Drew Allar, South Carolina's LaNorris Sellers, LSU's Garrett Nussmeier and Clemson's Cade Klubnik are just a handful of the top passers in college football this season who could end up in contention to be a first-round selection in 2026, if not the No. 1 overall pick. Here's an early look at how the first round of next year's draft could turn out, using the latest updated Super Bowl odds to determine the draft order:



1. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## ARCH MANNING

**QB | TEXAS**

The fact that the Saints spent a top-40 pick in 2025 on 25-year-old Tyler Shough won't stop them from taking Archie's grandson here. Manning still has a lot to prove on the field if he wants to live up to the hype and earn this spot, but the talent and upside are obviously there.

2. CLEVELAND BROWNS

## DREW ALLAR

**QB | PENN STATE**

Allar has been inconsistent, but he's got the physical tools to put it all together and launch himself into this range.

3. NEW YORK JETS

## CALEB DOWNS

**S | OHIO STATE**

A safety in the top three is a rare occurrence, but Downs is simply the best player in college football right now, regardless of position.

4. TENNESSEE TITANS

## T.J. PARKER

**EDGE | CLEMSON**

The Titans spent a second-round pick in this year's draft on a high-upside edge rusher in Oluwafemi Oladejo, but that shouldn't stop them from adding another one early next year.

5. NEW YORK GIANTS

## KADYN PROCTOR

**OT | ALABAMA**

The Giants still don't have a long-term answer on the right side. Proctor is an absolute mountain of a blocker who would be an immediate upgrade.

6. CAROLINA PANTHERS

## ANTHONY HILL JR.

**LB | TEXAS**

It's not fair to compare anyone to Luke Kuechly, but the last time the Panthers spent a top-10 pick on an off-ball linebacker, it worked out pretty well.

7. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

## FRANCIS MAUIGOA

**OT | MIAMI (FLA.)**

Mauigoa is a powerful, athletic prospect with the physical traits and upside to lock down the premium left tackle position for the Colts.

FROM LEFT: TK; SAM NAVARRO-IMAGN IMAGES;

8. LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

## LaNORRIS SELLERS

**QB | SOUTH CAROLINA**

Sellers is my favorite quarterback prospect in the 2026 class at the moment, with a rare blend of size, arm talent and athleticism.

9. CLEVELAND BROWNS (FROM JAX)

## KELDRIC FAULK

**EDGE | AUBURN**

Finding a blue-chip edge rusher to pair with Myles Garrett is enticing, and Faulk has a ton of explosiveness.

10. LOS ANGELES RAMS (FROM ATL)

## ISAIAH WORLD

**OT | OREGON**

World has a ton of starting experience and the physical tools to vault into the top-10 conversation.

11. ARIZONA CARDINALS

## JORDYN TYSON

**WR | ARIZONA STATE**

Even with Marvin Harrison Jr. and Trey McBride, the Cards could still invest premium resources into another high-end pass-catcher for Kyler Murray.

12. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

## PETER WOODS

**DL | CLEMSON**

Seattle needs a stout run-stuffer who can anchor with strength and power, and that's where Woods dominates.

13. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

## SPENCER FANO

**OT | UTAH**

Finding a long-term presence on the right side of the O-line should be next year's top task.

14. DALLAS COWBOYS

## NYCK HARBOR

**WR | SOUTH CAROLINA**

Harbor could be a nice complement to CeeDee Lamb, with a frame and explosiveness that draw comparisons to DK Metcalf.

15. MIAMI DOLPHINS

## JERMOD McCOY

**CB | TENNESSEE**

McCoy flashed first-round talent last year after transferring from Oregon State, picking off four passes and breaking up nine more.

16. CHICAGO BEARS

## RUEBEN BAIN JR.

**EDGE | MIAMI (FLA.)**

Chicago needs a young edge rusher to pair with Montez Sweat. Bain has all the measurables to make a big jump in 2025 that could land him in the first round.

17. PITTSBURGH STEELERS

## GARRETT NUSSMEIER

**QB | LSU**

Nussmeier was inconsistent last season but showed flashes of brilliance that could make him a first-round target if that level of play becomes his norm this year.

18. HOUSTON TEXANS

## JEREMIYAH LOVE

**RB | NOTRE DAME**

Joe Mixon will turn 30 before the start of the 2026 season, and the Texans could move on from his contract after 2025 with little dead money to worry about. Love is a dynamic back with the athleticism and explosiveness to be worthy of a top-20 selection.

19. MINNESOTA VIKINGS

## TACARIO DAVIS

**CB | WASHINGTON**

If the Vikings look for a top-flight corner in the first round next year, Davis has rare size for the position and the athleticism and ball skills to be a big-play magnet.

20. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

## DEONTAE LAWSON

**LB | ALABAMA**

Future Hall of Famer Lavonte David is the ageless wonder, but he could choose to hang up his cleats after a 14th season. Even if he doesn't, the Bucs would be wise to invest in his eventual successor here.

21. DENVER BRONCOS

## CALEB BANKS

**DL | FLORIDA**

Banks is a towering interior defender with the size, athleticism and physicality to dominate in the trenches and the versatility to attack from a wide range of different alignments.

22. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

## DANI DENNIS-SUTTON

**EDGE | PENN STATE**

Khalil Mack can't play forever, and Dennis-Sutton is big and athletic, with great pass-rushing chops, athleticism and explosiveness that give him a ton of upside.

23. LOS ANGELES RAMS

## CADE KLUBNIK

**QB | CLEMSON**

Klubnik looked much improved for the Tigers last season, and if he keeps up that trajectory of development in 2025, he could put himself in the first-round conversation as an eventual replacement for Matthew Stafford.

24. GREEN BAY PACKERS

## MALIK MUHAMMAD

**CB | TEXAS**

Muhammad is a smart, savvy cornerback with ideal instincts and ball skills that allow him to regularly break up passes that come his way.

25. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

## CARNELL TATE

**WR | OHIO STATE**

It remains to be seen if Brandon Aiyuk can return to form after his knee injury and live up to his huge contract extension, and even after spending a first-round pick on Ricky Pearsall last year, the 49ers could opt to use another one on a polished, high-upside pass-catcher.

26. CINCINNATI BENGALS

## AVIEON TERRELL

**CB | CLEMSON**

You can never have too many talented corners, and the Bengals could use one with Pro Bowl potential.

27. WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

## LT OVERTON

**DL | ALABAMA**

Overton's combination of size, strength and athleticism allows him to line up on the edge or slide inside.

28. DETROIT LIONS

## SONNY STYLES

**LB | OHIO STATE**

Styles has impressive size, with the versatility to play near the line of scrimmage or cover in space.

29. BALTIMORE RAVENS

## NICHOLAS SINGLETON

**RB | PENN STATE**

Derrick Henry will turn 32 by the end of this season, so it might be time to invest in a new workhorse. Singleton has the size and strength to carry that kind of load.

30. BUFFALO BILLS

## DENZEL BOSTON

**WR | WASHINGTON**

If a true No. 1 target is still an area of need in 2026, the Bills could opt for another big, athletic receiver.

31. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

## MATAYO UIAGALELEI

**EDGE | OREGON**

It wouldn't be surprising to see the Chiefs add another high-end edge rusher with their top pick next year.

32. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

## ZACHARIAH BRANCH

**WR | GEORGIA**

Branch is an undersized but explosive playmaker who could do some serious damage.

# AFC PREDICTIONS

## AFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. BUFFALO BILLS
2. BALTIMORE RAVENS
3. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
4. HOUSTON TEXANS
5. DENVER BRONCOS
6. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
7. CINCINNATI BENGALS

## WILD CARD WEEKEND

RAVENS OVER BENGALS

CHIEFS OVER CHARGERS

BRONCOS OVER TEXANS

## DIVISIONAL ROUND

BILLS OVER BRONCOS

RAVENS OVER CHIEFS

## CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

BILLS OVER RAVENS

## SUPER BOWL LX

BILLS OVER EAGLES

## AFC EAST

1 BUFFALO BILLS

2 MIAMI DOLPHINS

3 NEW YORK JETS

4 NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

## AFC NORTH

1 BALTIMORE RAVENS

2 CINCINNATI BENGALS

3 PITTSBURGH STEELERS

4 CLEVELAND BROWNS

## AFC SOUTH

1 HOUSTON TEXANS

2 INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

3 JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

4 TENNESSEE TITANS

## AFC WEST

1 KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

2 DENVER BRONCOS

3 LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

4 LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

## AFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Buffalo Bills
2. Baltimore Ravens
3. Kansas City Chiefs
4. Denver Broncos
5. Houston Texans
6. Los Angeles Chargers
7. Cincinnati Bengals
8. Pittsburgh Steelers
9. Miami Dolphins
10. Indianapolis Colts
11. Las Vegas Raiders
12. New York Jets
13. New England Patriots
14. Jacksonville Jaguars
15. Cleveland Browns
16. Tennessee Titans

## SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year
**JOE BURROW,** QB, BENGALS

Defensive Player of the Year
**KYLE HAMILTON,** S, RAVENS

Comeback Player of the Year
**DANIEL JONES,** QB, COLTS

Offensive Rookie of the Year
**ASHTON JEANTY,** RB, RAIDERS

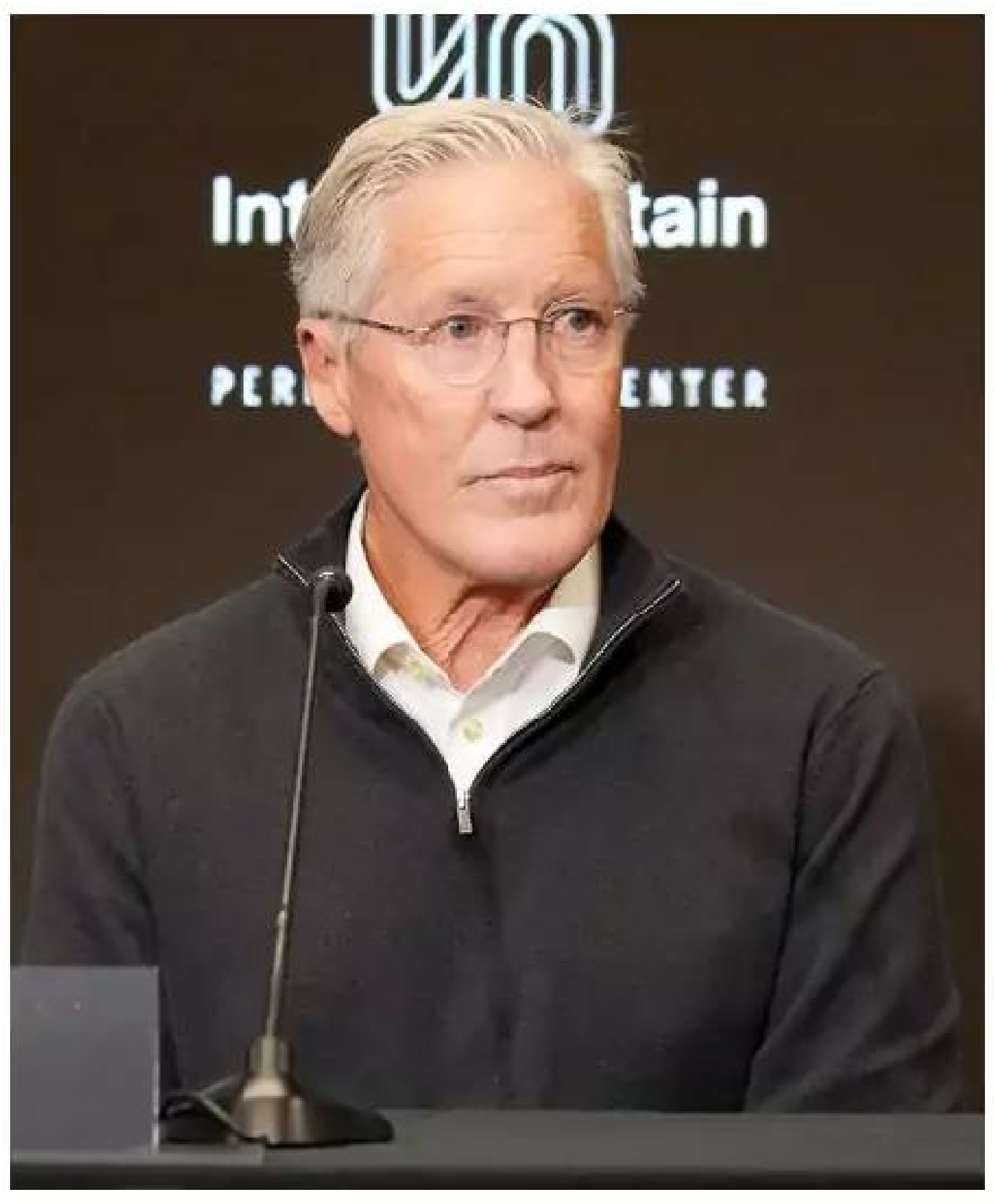
Defensive Rookie of the Year
**TRAVIS HUNTER,** CB, JAGUARS

Coach of the Year
**SEAN McDERMOTT,** BILLS

# AFC COACHING CAROUSEL

## HEAD COACHES

### LAS VEGAS RAIDERS



**New: Pete Carroll**
**Old: Antonio Pierce**

The Raiders were in this space last year after dumping Josh McDaniels for Pierce. Oddly enough, it's up to the 73-year-old Carroll to provide this franchise with some long-needed coaching continuity. Job 1 for Carroll this season is to address the NFL's worst rushing offense.

### NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

**New: Mike Vrabel**
**Old: Jerod Mayo**

Vrabel hopes to prove that it's better to be the guy who follows the guy who follows *the* guy. The one-year Jerod Mayo experiment that followed Bill Belichick's retirement was a failure, but Vrabel, like Mayo a player and coach steeped in the Patriot Way, actually has a track record of success as a head coach.

### NEW YORK JETS

**New: Aaron Glenn**
**Old: Robert Saleh/Jeff Ulbrich**

The defensive-minded Glenn finally gets his first head-coaching shot at 52. He has some pieces to work with, including a stout defensive front and a dynamic quarterback in Justin Fields. However, he may not get as much patience from the front office as he should — the Jets are suffering through the longest active playoff drought in major North American professional sports.

### JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

**New: Liam Coen**
**Old: Doug Pederson**

The Jaguars are hitting reset with the 39-year-old Coen, who gets to work with the ultimate chess piece in rookie two-way star Travis Hunter. More importantly, Coen will hope to reboot franchise quarterback Trevor Lawrence's languishing career.

## COORDINATORS

### CINCINNATI BENGALS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Al Golden**
**Old: Lou Anarumo**

### CLEVELAND BROWNS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Tommy Rees**
**Old: Ken Dorsey**

### HOUSTON TEXANS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Nick Caley**
**Old: Bobby Slowik**

### INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Lou Anarumo**
**Old: Gus Bradley**

### JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Grant Udinski**
**Old: Press Taylor**

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Anthony Campanile**
**Old: Ryan Nielsen**

### LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Chip Kelly**
**Old: Luke Getsy**

### NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Josh McDaniels**
**Old: Alex Van Pelt**

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Terrell Williams**
**Old: DeMarcus Covington**

### NEW YORK JETS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Tanner Engstrand**
**Old: Nathaniel Hackett**

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Steve Wilks**
**Old: Jeff Ulbrich**

LEFT COLUMN, FROM TOP: KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES; ERIC CANHA-IMAGN IMAGES; JOHN JONES-IMAGN IMAGES; COREY PERRINE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION
RIGHT COLUMN, FROM TOP: FRANK BOWEN IV/THE ENQUIRER; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK HOFFMAN/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL; BOB DECHIARA-USA TODAY SPORTS; MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

# BUF BILLS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Baltimore | 8:20 |
| Sept. 14 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Sept. 18 | Miami | 8:15 |
| Sept. 28 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | New England | 8:20 |
| Oct. 13 | at Atlanta | 7:15 |
| Oct. 19 | BYE | |
| Oct. 26 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | Kansas City | 4:25 |
| Nov. 9 | at Miami | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Nov. 20 | at Houston | 8:15 |
| Nov. 30 | at Pittsburgh | 4:25 |
| Dec. 7 | Cincinnati | 4:25 |
| Dec. 14 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | Philadelphia | 4:25 |
| TBD | N.Y. Jets | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 13 |
| 2021 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2022 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 13 |
| 2023 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2024 | AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 13 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Sean McDermott
**Record With Team:** 86-45
**Career Record:** 86-45
**Offensive Coordinator:** Joe Brady
**Defensive Coordinator:** Bobby Babich
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Chris Tabor
**Quarterbacks:** Ronald Curry
**Running Backs:** Kelly Skipper
**Wide Receivers:** Adam Henry
**Tight Ends:** Rob Boras
**Offensive Line:** Aaron Kromer
**Defensive Line:** Marcus West
**Linebackers:** Al Holcomb
**Cornerbacks:** Jahmile Addae
**Safeties:** Joe Danna

AFC EAST FORECAST
1

Since the start of the 2020 season — otherwise known in Buffalo as the demarcation line when Josh Allen went from being an inconsistent wild-child quarterback to a superstar league MVP — only one team has won more regular-season NFL games than the Bills.

Unfortunately for Allen, head coach Sean McDermott and general manager Brandon Beane, that team happens to be the Kansas City Chiefs. The Bills have won 61 games in that span — five fewer than the Chiefs and seven more than the third-place Green Bay Packers — and four of those victories came against the Chiefs. But that success has been overshadowed by the fact that in the playoffs, Kansas City has ended Buffalo's season four times, twice in the AFC Championship Game.

"You never want to build your team to beat one team because you never really know it's going to be them every year," McDermott said a few days after Buffalo's heartbreaking 32-29 loss in the AFC title game in January.

That may be true, but the reality is, the Chiefs have been the team the Bills have needed to beat, and they have not been able to do it when it has mattered the most. Allen has been a superhero in the playoff losses, but Buffalo's defense has perpetually performed poorly in the elimination games.

The Bills have won five straight AFC East crowns, and their average margin has been 3.5 games. Last season, they were five games better than the runner-up Miami Dolphins, and based on the state of the division, a sixth straight division title is likely in 2025. However, it won't matter if the Bills can't get past the Chiefs, or whichever team is in their way come January in the pursuit of an elusive Super Bowl appearance — something the Bills have not achieved since the 1993 season.

"Until you do it, you're always going to get questioned, right?" Beane says. "We know that, we're aware of that. I don't think it takes away from the success, though."

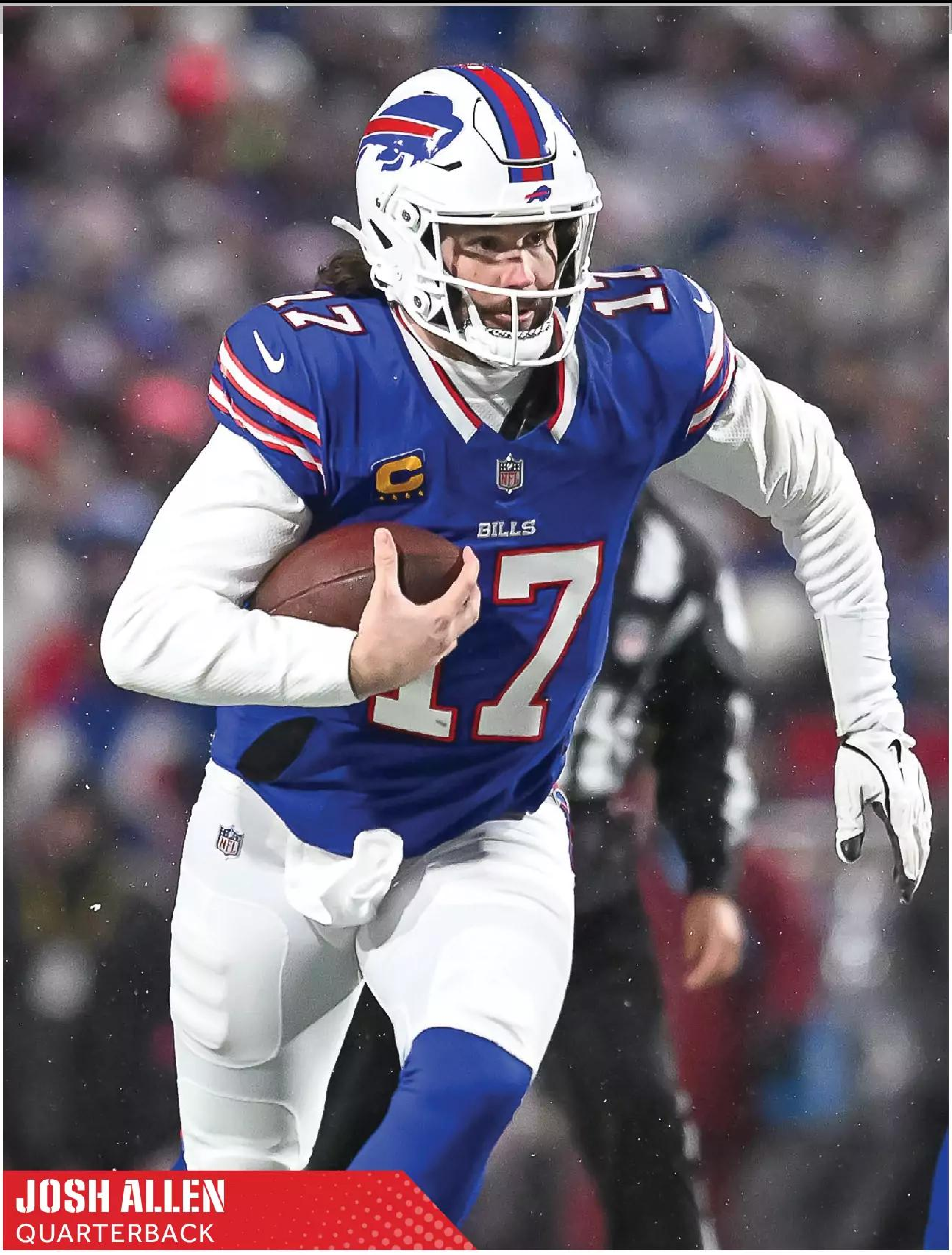
## OFFENSE

The Bills are coming off a 2024 season in which they set a franchise record with 525 points, and they didn't even need the extra 17th game to break the old standard set by the 2020 team.

Even with a less-than-inspiring wide receiver corps, and a diminished performance from banged-up second-year tight end Dalton Kincaid, the Bills scored at least 27 points in 15 games (counting the postseason). They scored 30 or more 13 times and 40 or more four times. It was an offense that surrendered a league-low 14 quarterback sacks and turned the ball over an NFL-low eight times, much of that due to Allen's brilliance.

It's easy to see similar production happening again in 2025. The offensive line — one of the best in the NFL — is unchanged; James Cook leads a diversified three-man running back attack; and wide receiver Joshua Palmer was signed in free agency to join forces with No. 1 target Khalil Shakir.

What's scary is that the Bills could be even more formidable if three things happen in the passing game: Wide receiver Keon Coleman, the 2024 second-round pick, emerges as a legitimate weapon after a sluggish, injury-slowed rookie season; Curtis Samuel finds his niche in the offense, something he was unable to do after signing as a free agent in 2024; and Kincaid takes a step forward and becomes the downfield threat the Bills thought they were getting when they picked him 25th overall in 2023.



**JOSH ALLEN**
QUARTERBACK

MARK KONEZNY-IMAGN IMAGES

Then there's Cook, who tied for the league lead with 16 rushing touchdowns. He's heading into the final year of his rookie contract, and he has made it clear he wants to get paid, be it by Buffalo or another team in 2026 free agency. He should be motivated to put up another big season, on the heels of back-to-back 1,000-yard rushing performances.

## DEFENSE

The Bills did not require a complete overhaul of their defense. After all, the unit produced 32 takeaways, the second-highest total in the league. But overall, this was the least efficient defense the Bills have fielded since 2020, finishing tied for 11th in points allowed per game, 17th in total defense, tied for 18th in yards per rushing attempt and sacks and a woeful 29th in third-down conversion percentage.

And the problems culminated in the loss to Kansas City, when the Chiefs scored a season-best 32 points and tied their season-high with 28 first downs. This, of course, has been a nagging trend; it has been the defense that is largely at fault for all five of the Bills' playoff losses since 2020. Beane knows this, and he attacked free agency and the draft with the mindset of altering that narrative.

Beane signed edge rushers Joey Bosa and Michael Hoecht, tackle Larry Ogunjobi and defensive backs Tre'Davious White, Dane Jackson and Darrick Forrest in free agency and took cornerback Maxwell Hairston, tackle T.J. Sanders, edge rusher Landon Jackson, tackle Deone Walker and defensive back Jordan Hancock in the first five rounds of the draft.

With those reinforcements in place, it's going to be a fascinating training camp as they battle with holdovers such as edge rushers Greg Rousseau, A.J. Epenesa and Javon Solomon, tackles Ed Oliver, DaQuan Jones and DeWayne Carter and defensive backs Christian Benford, Taylor Rapp, Cole Bishop, Damar Hamlin and Taron Johnson.

The hope is that the Bills become a more dangerous team in the pass rush and hold up better at the point of attack against the run. Turnovers are great, but there's a randomness to them. The Bills have to be more efficient at getting off the field and getting the ball back for their explosive offense.

## SPECIALISTS

The Bills released punter Sam Martin, so they will conduct a competition featuring NFL retreads Jake Camarda and Brad Robbins. It will likely be a fluid situation right up until the season begins.

Tyler Bass, who has suffered a few tough moments the last couple years, rebounded well in 2024 and scored 131 points, though he did miss a career-high five PATs.

The return game needs attention. Brandon Codrington fared well as a rookie, but he offers very little as a backup cornerback, and with all the competition added there, he may not make the team. The Bills will be cycling through several players in camp.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Bills remain the class of the AFC East, and they are without question a Super Bowl contender and will be as long as Allen is playing at the top of his game. Right now, there's no end in sight for that.

The key in 2025 will be the defense. With all the assets Beane has acquired, that unit simply has to be better. Buffalo is going to score points in bunches because the offense is a well-oiled machine, so the defense doesn't need to be otherworldly, at least not until the postseason. In the 12 postseason games since 2020, the defense has allowed an average of 24.2 points per game, and in the five losses, that number skies to 33.2. That must improve.

## 2024 RESULTS (13-4)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Arizona | W | 34-28 |
| Sept. | 12 | at Miami | W | 31-10 |
| Sept. | 23 | Jacksonville | W | 47-10 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Baltimore | L | 10-35 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Houston | L | 20-23 |
| Oct. | 14 | at N.Y. Jets | W | 23-20 |
| Oct. | 20 | Tennessee | W | 34-10 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Seattle | W | 31-10 |
| Nov. | 3 | Miami | W | 30-27 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Indianapolis | W | 30-20 |
| Nov. | 17 | Kansas City | W | 30-21 |
| Dec. | 1 | San Francisco | W | 35-10 |
| Dec. | 8 | at L.A. Rams | L | 42-44 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Detroit | W | 48-42 |
| Dec. | 22 | New England | W | 24-21 |
| Dec. | 29 | N.Y. Jets | W | 40-14 |
| Jan. | 5 | New England | L | 16-23 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | Denver | W | 31-7 |
| Jan. | 19 | Baltimore | W | 27-25 |
| Jan. | 21 | at Kansas City | L | 29-32 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 359.1 | 10 | 3 |
| Rushing | 131.2 | 9 | 3 |
| Passing | 227.9 | 9 | 3 |
| Scoring | 30.9 | 2 | 1 |
| Third Down % | 44.1 | 7 | 4 |
| Points/Play | 0.500 | 2 | 1 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 341.5 | 17 | 10 |
| Rushing | 115.5 | 12 | 7 |
| Passing | 226.1 | 24 | 12 |
| Scoring | 21.6 | T11 | 7 |
| Interceptions | 16 | T5 | T3 |
| Sacks | 39 | T18 | T8 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.356 | 14 | 7 |
| TO Differential | +24 | 1 | 1 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Josh Allen | 483 | 307 | 3,731 | 28 | 6 |
| Mitchell Trubisky | 26 | 19 | 179 | 0 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| James Cook | 207 | 1,009 | 4.9 | 16 |
| Josh Allen | 102 | 531 | 5.2 | 12 |
| Ray Davis | 113 | 442 | 3.9 | 3 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Khalil Shakir | 76 | 821 | 10.8 | 4 |
| Dalton Kincaid | 44 | 448 | 10.2 | 2 |
| James Cook | 32 | 258 | 8.1 | 2 |
| Mack Hollins | 31 | 378 | 12.2 | 5 |
| Curtis Samuel | 31 | 253 | 8.2 | 1 |
| Keon Coleman | 29 | 556 | 19.2 | 4 |

**KICKING:** Tyler Bass, 24-29 FGs, 59-64 PATs, 131 points
**TACKLES:** Dorian Williams, 117; Terrel Bernard, 104
**SACKS:** Greg Rousseau, 8.0; A.J. Epenesa, 6.0; Von Miller, 6.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** 7 players tied with 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**30-30** In 2024, the Bills became the first team in NFL history to have at least 30 rushing touchdowns and 30 passing touchdowns in the same season as they finished with a team-record 525 points and 65 TDs. So in free agency and the draft, general manager Brandon Beane did not feel the need to make too many changes, though some fans have already questioned that strategy. Beane's response was, "Look at the ranks last year; I don't think we've regressed. I didn't leave last season on offense going, 'Man, this didn't work. Like we didn't get the job done.' I didn't see us coming up short in games or in the playoffs on the offensive side of the ball."

ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

**KEEPING HIM CLEAN** Josh Allen took only 14 sacks last season, the fewest of any NFL quarterback since 2009. And that also played a role in the Bills committing only eight turnovers, the lowest total in the league since 2019. Interestingly, Allen was the only Bill to have any turnovers — six interceptions and two lost fumbles.

**BEATING THE BEST** The Bills saved some of their best performances for the best teams in 2024. They became the first team in NFL history to beat two teams in the same season that won at least 14 games, as they beat the 15-2 Kansas City Chiefs and 15-2 Detroit Lions. Of course, that did not continue in the postseason, when they lost to Kansas City in the AFC Championship Game.

**DEFENDING THEIR HOUSE** As they head into their final season at 53-year-old Highmark Stadium, the Bills are riding the longest active regular-season home winning streak in the NFL at 11 games, dating back to Week 11 in 2023. In going 8-0 in 2024, the Bills went unbeaten at home for only the third time in team history and the first since the 1990 season, which was when they made their first Super Bowl appearance.

# SCOUTING THE BILLS

## OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BUFFALO

"Brandon Beane has a legitimate gripe about all the complaints about the receivers from the media. Yes, this isn't an elite group, but they are more than capable of scoring a lot of points. Plus, I still see a lot of untapped potential from Keon Coleman and Joshua Palmer. A healthy Khalil Shakir makes a huge difference. … Having two big, athletic tight ends in Dalton Kincaid and Dawson Knox creates mismatches for linebackers and safeties. … Josh Allen is the ultimate dual-threat guy. He beats you with his arm. He beats you with his legs. The intangibles are beyond special. He's a true winner. … James Cook wants way too much money to get a deal done before this season. I could see this turning into a franchise tag situation down the road, or he walks. I doubt they would trade him. … Dion Dawkins is one nasty dude. He plays with a legit mean streak, but his footwork and technique are highly underrated. … I like the upside with O'Cyrus Torrence. … Joey Bosa seems like the perfect fit for a blue-collar team and a blue-collar city; could see him becoming a huge fan favorite. … Greg Rousseau brings a lot of heat off the edge. … Ed Oliver is great at shooting gaps. … When Matt Milano got hurt, the defense took a definite step back. … From an instinct, coverage and tackling evaluation, it's every box checked with Terrel Bernard. … The deal for Christian Benford was right on for the market value. … The investment in Taron Johnson was another smart move. … Not sure how much Tre'Davious White has left, or if he can stay healthy."

## 2025 BILLS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 Allen, Josh | QB | 6-5 | 237 | 7 | Wyoming | D1a-18 | D1a-Buf-18 |
| 6 Buechele, Shane | QB | 6-0 | 210 | 1 | SMU | FA-23 | FA-KC-21 |
| 11 Trubisky, Mitchell | QB | 6-2 | 220 | 8 | North Carolina | FA-Pit-24 | D1-Chi-17 |
| 14 White, Mike | QB | 6-5 | 216 | 6 | WKU | FA-24 | D5-Dal-18 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Cook, James | RB | 5-11 | 190 | 3 | Georgia | D2-22 | D2-Buf-22 |
| 22 Davis, Ray | RB | 5-8 | 211 | 1 | Kentucky | D4-24 | D4-Buf-24 |
| 21 Evans, Darrynton | RB | 5-10 | 203 | 4 | Appalachian State | FA-Chi-25 | D3-Ten-20 |
| 41 Gilliam, Reggie | FB | 6-0 | 244 | 5 | Toledo | FA-20 | FA-Buf-20 |
| 20 Gore Jr., Frank | RB | 5-8 | 201 | 1 | Southern Miss | FA-24 | FA-Buf-24 |
| 26 Johnson, Ty | RB | 5-10 | 210 | 5 | Maryland | FA-23 | D6-Det-19 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Coleman, Keon | WR | 6-3 | 213 | 1 | Florida State | D2-24 | D2-Buf-24 |
| 84 Davidson, Zach | TE | 6-7 | 251 | 2 | Central Missouri | FA-22 | D5-Min-21 |
| 19 Hamler, K.J. | WR | 5-9 | 178 | 4 | Penn State | FA-24 | D2-Den-20 |
| 86 Kincaid, Dalton | TE | 6-3 | 246 | 2 | Utah | D1-23 | D1-Buf-23 |
| 88 Knox, Dawson | TE | 6-4 | 254 | 6 | Ole Miss | D3b-19 | D3b-Buf-19 |
| 18 Moore, Elijah | WR | 5-10 | 180 | 4 | Ole Miss | FA-Cle-25 | D2-NYJ-21 |
| 5 Palmer, Joshua | WR | 6-1 | 210 | 4 | Tennessee | FA-LAC-25 | D3a-LAC-21 |
| 1 Samuel, Curtis | WR | 5-11 | 195 | 8 | Ohio State | FA-Was-24 | D2a-Car-17 |
| 10 Shakir, Khalil | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 3 | Boise State | D5-22 | D5-Buf-22 |
| 80 Shavers, Tyrell | WR | 6-4 | 211 | 1 | San Diego State | FA-23 | FA-Buf-23 |
| 15 Shenault Jr., Laviska | WR | 6-1 | 227 | 6 | Colorado | FA-25 | D2-Jac-20 |
| 89 Virgil, Jalen | WR | 6-1 | 210 | 3 | App State | FA-24 | FA-Den-22 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70 Anderson, Alec | T | 6-5 | 305 | 2 | UCLA | FA-22 | FA-Buf-22 |
| 79 Brown, Spencer | T | 6-8 | 311 | 4 | Northern Iowa | D3-21 | D3-Buf-21 |
| 67 Clayton, Travis | T | 6-7 | 303 | 1 | None | D7-24 | D7-Buf-24 |
| 73 Dawkins, Dion | T | 6-5 | 320 | 8 | Temple | D2b-17 | D2b-Buf-17 |
| 76 Edwards, David | G | 6-6 | 308 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-LAR-23 | D5-LAR-19 |
| 65 Edwards, Mike | G | 6-5 | 363 | 1 | Campbell | FA-24 | FA-Buf-24 |
| 75 Gouraige, Richard | T | 6-5 | 306 | 1 | Florida | FA-23 | FA-Buf-23 |
| 68 Grable, Tylan | T | 6-5 | 313 | 1 | UCF | D6-24 | D6-Buf-24 |
| 53 Green, Kendrick | C/G | 6-3 | 310 | 3 | Illinois | FA-Hou-25 | D3-Pit-21 |
| 66 McGovern, Connor | C | 6-6 | 318 | 6 | Penn State | FA-Dal-23 | D3-Dal-19 |
| 64 Torrence, O'Cyrus | G | 6-5 | 330 | 2 | Florida | D2-23 | D2-Buf-23 |
| 74 Van Demark, Ryan | T | 6-6 | 307 | 2 | UConn | FA-22 | FA-Ind-22 |
| 62 Van Pran-Granger, S. | C/G | 6-4 | 315 | 1 | Georgia | D5-24 | D5-Buf-24 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 Bosa, Joey | DE | 6-5 | 280 | 9 | Ohio State | FA-LAC-25 | D1-LAC-16 |
| 90 Carter, DeWayne | DT | 6-2 | 302 | 1 | Duke | D3-24 | D3-Buf-24 |
| 57 Epenesa, A.J. | DE | 6-6 | 260 | 5 | Iowa | D2-20 | D2-Buf-20 |
| 55 Hoecht, Michael | DE | 6-4 | 267 | 4 | Brown | FA-LAR-25 | FA-LAR-20 |
| 92 Jones, DaQuan | DT | 6-4 | 320 | 11 | Penn State | FA-Car-22 | D4a-Ten-14 |
| 93 Logue, Zion | DT | 6-6 | 325 | 1 | Georgia | PS-Atl-24 | D6-Atl-24 |
| 99 Ogunjobi, Larry | DT | 6-3 | 305 | 8 | Charlotte | FA-Pit-25 | D3-Cle-17 |
| 91 Oliver, Ed | DT | 6-1 | 287 | 6 | Houston | D1-19 | D1-Buf-19 |
| Rogers, Casey | DT | 6-5 | 305 | 1 | Oregon | W-NYG-25 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 50 Rousseau, Greg | DE | 6-6 | 266 | 4 | Miami (Fla.) | D1-21 | D1-Buf-21 |
| 56 Solomon, Javon | DE | 6-1 | 246 | 1 | Troy | D5-24 | D5-Buf-24 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 Andreessen, Joe | LB | 6-0 | 240 | 1 | Buffalo | FA-24 | FA-Buf-24 |
| 43 Bernard, Terrel | LB | 6-1 | 224 | 3 | Baylor | D3-22 | D3-Buf-22 |
| 58 Milano, Matt | LB | 6-0 | 223 | 8 | Boston College | D5a-17 | D5a-Buf-17 |
| 54 Spector, Baylon | LB | 6-0 | 233 | 3 | Clemson | D7-22 | D7-Buf-22 |
| 48 Ulofoshio, Edefuan | LB | 6-0 | 239 | 1 | Washington | D5-24 | D5-Buf-24 |
| 42 Williams, Dorian | LB | 6-1 | 228 | 2 | Tulane | D3-23 | D3-Buf-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 47 Benford, Christian | CB | 6-1 | 205 | 3 | Villanova | D6b-22 | D6b-Buf-22 |
| 24 Bishop, Cole | S | 6-2 | 206 | 1 | Utah | D2-24 | D2-Buf-24 |
| 29 Codrington, Brandon | CB | 5-9 | 185 | 1 | NC Central | T-NYJ-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 33 Couch, Te'Cory | CB | 5-10 | 185 | 1 | Miami | FA-24 | FA-Buf-24 |
| 28 Forrest, Darrick | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | Cincinnati | FA-Was-25 | D5-Was-21 |
| 3 Hamlin, Damar | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | Pitt | D6b-21 | D6b-Buf-21 |
| 25 Hardy, Daequan | CB | 5-9 | 179 | 1 | Penn State | D6-24 | D6-Buf-24 |
| 46 Ingram, Ja'Marcus | CB | 6-2 | 190 | 1 | Buffalo | FA-22 | FA-Buf-22 |
| 23 Jackson, Dane | CB | 5-11 | 180 | 5 | Pittsburgh | FA-Car-25 | D7-Buf-20 |
| 7 Johnson, Taron | CB | 5-11 | 192 | 7 | Weber State | D4-18 | D4-Buf-18 |
| 39 Lewis, Cam | DB | 5-9 | 183 | 5 | Buffalo | FA-19 | FA-Buf-19 |
| 9 Rapp, Taylor | S | 6-0 | 208 | 6 | Washington | FA-LAR-23 | D2-LAR-19 |
| 27 White, Tre'Davious | CB | 5-9 | 196 | 8 | LSU | FA-Bal-25 | D1-Buf-17 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Bass, Tyler | K | 5-10 | 183 | 5 | Georgia Southern | D6-20 | D6-Buf-20 |
| 32 Camarda, Jake | P | 6-1 | 193 | 4 | Georgia | FA-25 | D4-TB-22 |
| 69 Ferguson, Reid | LS | 6-2 | 235 | 8 | LSU | FA-16 | FA-Buf-16 |
| 40 Robbins, Brad | P | 6-1 | 205 | 1 | Michigan | FA-25 | D6b-Cin-23 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 5 | Joshua Palmer | 1 | Curtis Samuel |
| WR | 0 | Keon Coleman | 80 | Tyrell Shavers |
| WR | 10 | Khalil Shakir | 89 | Jalen Virgil |
| LT | 73 | Dion Dawkins | 74 | Ryan Van Demark |
| LG | 76 | David Edwards | 70 | Alec Anderson |
| C | 66 | Connor McGovern | 62 | Sedrick Van Pran-Granger |
| RG | 64 | O'Cyrus Torrence | 65 | Mike Edwards |
| RT | 79 | Spencer Brown | 68 | Tylan Grable |
| TE | 86 | Dalton Kincaid | 88 | Dawson Knox |
| QB | 17 | Josh Allen | 11 | Mitchell Trubisky |
| RB | 4 | James Cook | 26 | Ty Johnson |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 50 | Greg Rousseau | 57 | A.J. Epenesa |
| DT | 91 | Ed Oliver | 98 | T.J. Sanders (R) |
| DT | 92 | DaQuan Jones | 99 | Larry Ogunjobi |
| DE | 97 | Joey Bosa | 55 | Michael Hoecht |
| OLB | 58 | Matt Milano | 42 | Dorian Williams |
| MLB | 8 | Terrel Bernard | 44 | Joe Andreessen |
| CB | 27 | Tre'Davious White | 31 | Maxwell Hairston (R) |
| CB | 47 | Christian Benford | 23 | Dane Jackson |
| NB | 7 | Taron Johnson | 39 | Cam Lewis |
| S | 9 | Taylor Rapp | 28 | Darrick Forrest |
| S | 24 | Cole Bishop | 3 | Damar Hamlin |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 2 | Tyler Bass | KR | 29 | Brandon Codrington |
| P | 32 | Jake Camarda | PR | 29 | Brandon Codrington |

**+14**

A physical Buffalo culture led the NFL in fewest fumbles lost (2) and most fumbles recovered (16), creating a +14 turnover margin just on fumbles.

## BILLS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Maxwell Hairston | CB | 5-11 | 183 | Kentucky |
| 2 | T.J. Sanders | DT | 6-4 | 297 | South Carolina |
| 3 | Landon Jackson | Edge | 6-6 | 264 | Arkansas |
| 4 | Deone Walker | DT | 6-7 | 331 | Kentucky |
| 5 | Jordan Hancock | CB | 6-0 | 195 | Ohio State |
| 5 | Jackson Hawes | TE | 6-4 | 253 | Georgia Tech |
| 6 | Dorian Strong | CB | 6-1 | 185 | Virginia Tech |
| 6 | Chase Lundt | OT | 6-7 | 304 | UConn |
| 7 | Kaden Prather | WR | 6-3 | 204 | Maryland |

General manager Brandon Beane knew he had to upgrade three specific glaring needs at cornerback, defensive tackle and edge rusher. He systematically picked them off one-by-one in the first five rounds, and all five were considered excellent value when they were chosen. Maxwell Hairston will have a chance to win the only vacant starting spot on the roster, CB2. Jordan Hancock will compete as a backup nickel while becoming a core special-teamer. Up front, T.J. Sanders and Deone Walker will be plugged into a defensive tackle rotation that needed size and athleticism, and Landon Jackson is yet another tall, rangy edge rusher who fits Buffalo's prototype for the position. The only notable offensive add is Jackson Hawes, who should be the bruising blocking tight end the Bills have lacked.

# DOLPHINS

AFC EAST FORECAST

**2**

The weather isn't the only thing warm in South Florida. Miami Dolphins head coach Mike McDaniel and general manager Chris Grier might want to check the temperature of their seats.

The tandem was brought back after a disappointing 8-9 2024 season, but owner Stephen Ross' statement, released about an hour after last season's finale, made it clear that the status quo was not acceptable.

Miami remains the franchise with the NFL's longest playoff win drought, last winning a postseason game on Dec. 30, 2000. The franchise did make wild-card appearances in the 2022 and '23 seasons, but after failing to make the playoffs in '24, merely sneaking in and bowing out in the first round this season would feel like a positive trend.

One reason for pessimism: The roster, on paper, doesn't stack up to those of recent Dolphins teams. Three-time All-Pro and seven-time Pro Bowl cornerback Jalen Ramsey is certain to be traded away. Another possible future Hall of Famer, defensive lineman Calais Campbell, fled to the Arizona Cardinals while still playing at a high level at age 38. His departure and the retirement of five-time Pro Bowl left tackle Terron Armstead create a huge leadership void.

The most high-profile remaining veteran, wide receiver Tyreek Hill, is now at a point where he creates more off-field distractions than on-field production after failing to reach 1,000 receiving yards in 2024 and missing the Pro Bowl for the first time in his career.

## OFFENSE

The most important factor for the Dolphins offense is quarterback Tua Tagovailoa's availability. He missed six games in 2024 — four due to an IR stint for a concussion and two more with a hip injury at the end of the season. Miami was 2-4 in those games.

Although he led the league in completion percentage a year after directing the league's No. 1 passing offense, Tagovailoa's play left much to be desired. But his presence still matters a great deal to this offense.

If Tagovailoa misses time again, new No. 2 Zach Wilson's familiarity with a similar offense under offensive coordinator Mike LaFleur with the New York Jets can only help. Wilson, though, still feels more like a project than a proven, veteran backup who can keep a season afloat if Tagovailoa is sidelined again.

The wide receiver tandem of Hill and Jaylen Waddle could use a resurgence to its form from the pair's first two years together. They were unable to beat a variety of bracket coverages deriving from two-high-safety looks last season.

One facet that can help is the addition of Nick Westbrook-Ikhine, who gives the receiving corps a bigger-bodied red-zone threat to complement the smaller, speedy Hill and Waddle. Westbrook-Ikhine is also touted for his blocking, which can help open up a struggling run game.

Tight end Jonnu Smith, who broke Dolphins records at the position last year with 88 receptions for 884 yards and eight touchdowns, can also take some of the heat off Hill and Waddle, but Smith, Miami's lone Pro Bowl selection last season, is a liability as a blocker.

Miami boasts a big-play run game with running back De'Von Achane — but it's very hit or miss. The Dolphins don't convert well in short-yardage situations, and while Achane can hit the home run, he gets tackled behind the line of scrimmage too often.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | New England | 1:00 |
| Sept. 18 | at Buffalo | 8:15 |
| Sept. 29 | N.Y. Jets | 7:15 |
| Oct. 5 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Oct. 30 | Baltimore | 8:15 |
| Nov. 9 | Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | Washington (Madrid) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Nov. 23 | BYE | |
| Nov. 30 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Dec. 15 | at Pittsburgh | 8:15 |
| Dec. 21 | Cincinnati | 8:20 |
| Dec. 28 | Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| TBA | at New England | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 10 |
| 2022 | 9 |
| 2022 AFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| 2023 AFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2024 | 8 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Mike McDaniel
**Record With Team:** 28-23
**Career Record:** 28-23
**Offensive Coordinator:** Frank Smith
**Defensive Coordinator:** Anthony Weaver
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Craig Aukerman
**Quarterbacks/Pass Game Coordinator:** Darrell Bevell
**Associate Head Coach/Running Backs:** Eric Studesville
**Wide Receivers:** Robert Prince
**Assistant Head Coach/Tight Ends:** Jon Embree
**Offensive Line:** Butch Barry
**Defensive Line:** Austin Clark
**Linebackers/Run Game Coordinator:** Joe Barry
**Outside Linebackers:** Ryan Crow
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: Brian Duker
**Cornerbacks:** Mathieu Araujo
**Defensive Backs/Pass Game Specialist:** Ryan Slowik

**TYREEK HILL**
WIDE RECEIVER

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

The offseason started with Grier saying he needed to invest in the offensive line. He dished out his biggest contract in the first wave of free agency to guard James Daniels, who's coming off a torn Achilles early last season with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Grier also traded up in the second round of the draft to take another guard in Arizona's Jonah Savaiinaea. Liam Eichenberg re-signed, but he will have to be better to retain his starting spot. Armstead's retirement means that 2024 second-round pick Patrick Paul, who was still raw as a rookie and needs to make strides, is the new starting left tackle.

## DEFENSE

The Ramsey trade talks greatly impact coordinator Anthony Weaver's defense. Ramsey was used as what Weaver called an "ultimate chess piece." The Dolphins will no longer have a versatile shutdown corner to put on an opponent's top receiving threat or slide inside to play the nickel and even blitz from that position.

Aside from nickel Kader Kohou, it's a brand-new secondary in Miami. Safety Jevon Holland departed to the New York Giants in free agency; safety Jordan Poyer is a free agent who may retire; and cornerback Kendall Fuller was released.

New safety Ifeatu Melifonwu can be that versatile defender in the secondary, capable of playing in the box, on the boundary as a corner, over the slot and in the traditional safety roles. His problem has been staying healthy. Miami also brought in a ball hawk in Ashtyn Davis at safety. Special teamer and reserve Elijah Campbell and second-year safety Patrick McMorris will also compete for playing time.

The Dolphins are sure to scour the remaining free-agent cornerback market for a starter, while youngsters Cam Smith and Storm Duck vie for a starting spot.

Defensive tackle Zach Sieler anchors the defensive line, and he is coming off back-to-back double-digit sack seasons, underscoring that he is a consistent interior pass-rusher to go with his prowess in defending the run. He has been joined by an infusion of youth on the defensive line, as Miami used the No. 13 pick of the draft on Michigan defensive tackle Kenneth Grant and added a fifth-rounder (Jordan Phillips) and seventh-rounder (Zeek Biggers).

Chop Robinson, a first-round pick in 2024, is coming off a six-sack season that saw him finish fifth in Defensive Rookie of the Year voting, but he needs to set the edge better against the run. The Dolphins hope fellow edge rushers Jaelan Phillips and Bradley Chubb can return to some semblance of their former selves following their respective torn ACLs. Chubb's injury occurred late in 2023 and cost him all of last season.

The Dolphins defense has a rock in the middle in linebacker Jordyn Brooks and his 132 tackles. Miami has shuffled through inside linebackers next to him, but Tyrel Dodson finished strong there last season and looks to hold off newcomers K.J. Britt and Willie Gay Jr.

## SPECIALISTS

Kicker Jason Sanders was exceptional in 2024, making 90% of his field-goal attempts, including 12-of-14 from beyond 50 yards. New special teams coordinator Craig Aukerman has brought in his former punter — the Tennessee Titans' Ryan Stonehouse, who has one of the bigger legs in the NFL but still has to beat out incumbent Jake Bailey. Second-year receiver Malik Washington should be solid in the return game. Aukerman will have to get the Dolphins' kickoff and punt coverage units in order, though.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

With a net loss of talent on the roster, it'll take McDaniel, Tagovailoa, Hill and others to be at their best, or it will be another season of hovering around .500 and hoping for help in Week 18 to sneak into the playoffs.

## 2024 RESULTS (8-9)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Jacksonville | W | 20-17 |
| Sept. | 12 | Buffalo | L | 10-31 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Seattle | L | 3-24 |
| Sept. | 30 | Tennessee | L | 12-31 |
| Oct. | 6 | at New England | W | 15-10 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Indianapolis | L | 10-16 |
| Oct. | 27 | Arizona | L | 27-28 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Buffalo | L | 27-30 |
| Nov. | 11 | at L.A. Rams | W | 23-15 |
| Nov. | 17 | Las Vegas | W | 34-19 |
| Nov. | 24 | New England | W | 34-15 |
| Nov. | 28 | at Green Bay | L | 17-30 |
| Dec. | 8 | N.Y. Jets (ot) | W | 32-26 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Houston | L | 12-20 |
| Dec. | 22 | San Francisco | W | 29-17 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Cleveland | W | 20-3 |
| Jan. | 5 | at N.Y. Jets | L | 20-32 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 325.4 | 18 | 6 |
| Rushing | 105.6 | 21 | 10 |
| Passing | 219.8 | 15 | 6 |
| Scoring | 20.3 | 22 | 10 |
| Third Down % | 36.3 | 25 | 13 |
| Points/Play | 0.319 | 25 | 12 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 314.4 | 4 | 3 |
| Rushing | 103.7 | 9 | 5 |
| Passing | 210.7 | 9 | 5 |
| Scoring | 21.4 | 10 | 6 |
| Interceptions | 10 | T22 | T11 |
| Sacks | 35 | 27 | 13 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.360 | T15 | 8 |
| TO Differential | -5 | T20 | 11 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tua Tagovailoa | 399 | 291 | 2,867 | 19 | 7 |
| Tyler Huntley | 133 | 86 | 829 | 3 | 3 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| De'Von Achane | 203 | 907 | 4.5 | 6 |
| Raheem Mostert | 85 | 278 | 3.3 | 2 |
| Jaylen Wright | 68 | 249 | 3.7 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jonnu Smith | 88 | 884 | 10.0 | 8 |
| Tyreek Hill | 81 | 959 | 11.8 | 6 |
| De'Von Achane | 78 | 592 | 7.6 | 6 |
| Jaylen Waddle | 58 | 744 | 12.8 | 2 |
| Malik Washington | 26 | 223 | 8.6 | 0 |

**KICKING:** Jason Sanders, 37-41 FGs, 26-28 PATs, 137 points
**TACKLES:** Jordyn Brooks, 143; Jordan Poyer, 98
**SACKS:** Zach Sieler, 10.0; Chop Robinson, 6.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Tyrel Dodson, 3; Kader Kohou, 2; Jalen Ramsey, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**CHANGING THE CULTURE** Head coach Mike McDaniel hopes to eliminate player tardiness for meetings. It was something he revealed as a problem at the end of last season, one that leads to a disconnected unit, especially in his complex offense with lots of formations and pre-snap motions. At the end of the day, though, the players are supposed to be adults and professionals and shouldn't need the head coach harping on them.

**POLYNESIAN PAIR** Second-round pick **Jonah Savaiinaea** is Samoan, like Tua Tagovailoa, and attended Tua's same high school, Saint Louis in Honolulu. Savaiinaea says he has actually always had Polynesian quarterbacks to block for during the different phases of his football career.

**CALLING IT A CAREER** Terron Armstead threw a retirement party in the artsy, hip Wynwood section of Miami this offseason. McDaniel and Dolphins teammates Tagovailoa, Tyreek Hill, Calais Campbell and more attended, along with former Saints cohorts Drew Brees and Cameron Jordan. The decorated left tackle told stories of how his father's addiction to drugs and the birth of his twin daughters while in college at Arkansas-Pine Bluff motivated him. He also told a story of how he was driven by an incident in which Saints head coach Sean Payton challenged him during one of his first preseason games, saying he might not be cut out for the NFL.

**FARMING OUT** New linebacker Willie Gay Jr. has taken up farming at his 90-acre home in Mississippi. Gay says he gets daily eggs from his chickens and is adding cows to the farm.

# SCOUTING THE DOLPHINS

## OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MIAMI

"Tyreek Hill is a serious problem. When is the last time he's gone more than a few months without some kind of drama? At some point, the talent, which is undeniable, needs to match up with the stability and, quite frankly, the character. He's coming off a down year and needs to bounce back given how much they're paying him. … The growing rumors about the job security of Mike McDaniel and Chris Grier are getting louder and louder. The time to win is now, or Stephen Ross is going to find someone else who can. … Jayden Waddle is steady Eddie. He gets open consistently. He catches the football. He's good after the catch. Solid, solid dude. … While it's going to take some time for Patrick Paul to fill the big cleats of Terron Armstead now that he's officially retired, they got this draft pick right. … Tua Tagovailoa has gotten much better at sliding, falling and generally protecting himself inside and outside the pocket. The accuracy and the arm, it's where it needs to be. There are some games, though, where he's had lapses. … De'Von Achane has speed to burn, and his versatility is a huge plus. … The broken relationship between Jalen Ramsey and McDaniel is why he's on the trade block. No one has been able to explain what happened, but I was told this actually has nothing to do with money. It's a vote of no confidence in McDaniel. If the Ramsey trade goes down, this is a huge talent drain in the secondary. … Zach Sieler is a butt-kicker inside. .. It's comeback season for Jaelan Phillips and Bradley Chubb. When they're healthy, this defense is so much better. … Jordyn Brooks is a true run-and-hit linebacker."

JACOB MUSSELMAN-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 DOLPHINS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tagovailoa, Tua | QB | 6-1 | 225 | 5 | Alabama | D1a-20 | D1a-Mia-20 |
| 0 | Wilson, Zach | QB | 6-2 | 214 | 4 | BYU | FA-Den-25 | D1a-NYJ-21 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Achane, De'Von | RB | 5-9 | 188 | 2 | Texas A&M | D3-23 | D3-Mia-23 |
| 30 | Ingold, Alec | FB | 6-1 | 232 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-LV-22 | FA-LV-19 |
| 8 | Mattison, Alexander | RB | 5-11 | 220 | 6 | Boise State | FA-LV-25 | D3-Min-19 |
| 25 | Wright, Jaylen | RB | 5-10 | 210 | 1 | Tennessee | D4-24 | D4-Mia-24 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 86 | Black, Tarik | WR | 6-3 | 213 | 1 | Texas | FA-24 | FA-Ind-21 |
| 85 | Brown, Pharaoh | TE | 6-5 | 270 | 8 | Oregon | FA-Sea-25 | FA-LV-17 |
| 80 | Conner, Tanner | TE | 6-3 | 232 | 2 | Idaho State | FA-22 | FA-Mia-22 |
| 82 | Eskridge, Dee | WR | 5-9 | 190 | 4 | Western Michigan | FA-24 | D2-Sea-21 |
| 84 | Ezukanma, Erik | WR | 6-2 | 206 | 2 | Texas Tech | D4-22 | D4-Mia-22 |
| 89 | Hill, Julian | TE | 6-4 | 251 | 2 | Campbell | FA-23 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 10 | Hill, Tyreek | WR | 5-10 | 191 | 9 | West Alabama | T-KC-22 | D5b-KC-16 |
| 87 | Rucci, Hayden | TE | 6-4 | 253 | 1 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 9 | Smith, Jonnu | TE | 6-3 | 248 | 8 | FIU | FA-Atl-24 | D3b-Ten-17 |
| 17 | Waddle, Jaylen | WR | 5-10 | 185 | 4 | Alabama | D1a-21 | D1a-Mia-21 |
| 6 | Washington, Malik | WR | 5-8 | 191 | 1 | Virginia | D6a-24 | D6a-Mia-24 |
| 82 | Washington, Tahj | WR | 5-10 | 174 | 1 | USC | D7-24 | D7-Mia-24 |
| 18 | Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick | WR | 6-2 | 211 | 5 | Indiana | FA-Ten-25 | FA-Ten-20 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 79 | Borom, Larry | OL | 6-5 | 333 | 4 | Missouri | FA-Chi-25 | D5-Chi-21 |
| 55 | Brewer, Aaron | OL | 6-1 | 295 | 5 | Texas State | FA-Ten-24 | FA-Ten-20 |
| 76 | Carman, Jackson | T | 6-5 | 322 | 4 | Clemson | FA-24 | D2-Cin-21 |
| 78 | Daniels, James | OL | 6-4 | 327 | 7 | Iowa | FA-Pit-25 | D2a-Chi-18 |
| 74 | Eichenberg, Liam | OL | 6-6 | 302 | 4 | Notre Dame | D2b-21 | D2b-Mia-21 |
| 78 | Hayes, Ryan | T | 6-6 | 303 | 1 | Michigan | D7-23 | D7-Mia-23 |
| 73 | Jackson, Austin | OL | 6-5 | 315 | 5 | USC | D1b-20 | D1b-Mia-20 |
| 79 | Matos, Bayron | T | 6-7 | 334 | 1 | South Florida | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 60 | Meyer, Andrew | OL | 6-3 | 295 | 1 | UTEP | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 52 | Paul, Patrick | T | 6-7 | 332 | 1 | Houston | D2-24 | D2-Mia-24 |
| 71 | Smith, Kion | T | 6-5 | 300 | 2 | Fayetteville State | FA-21 | FA-Atl-21 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Butler, Matthew | DT | 6-3 | 290 | 2 | Tennessee | W-LV-25 | D5-LV-22 |
| 98 | Dickerson, Matt | DT | 6-5 | 298 | 6 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Ten-18 |
| 95 | Jones, Benito | DT | 6-1 | 335 | 4 | Ole Miss | FA-Det-24 | FA-Mia-20 |
| 92 | Sieler, Zach | DT | 6-6 | 300 | 7 | Ferris State | W-Bal-19 | D7-Bal-18 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56 | Bell, Quinton | LB | 6-4 | 255 | 3 | Prairie View A&M | FA-23 | D7-LV-19 |
| 58 | Bradley-King, William | LB | 6-4 | 265 | 1 | Baylor | FA-24 | D7-Was-21 |
| 3 | Britt, K.J. | LB | 6-0 | 235 | 4 | Auburn | FA-TB-25 | D5-TB-21 |
| 20 | Brooks, Jordyn | LB | 6-0 | 240 | 5 | Texas Tech | FA-Sea-24 | D1-Sea-20 |
| 2 | Chubb, Bradley | LB | 6-4 | 268 | 7 | NC State | T-Den-22 | D1-Den-18 |
| 11 | Dodson, Tyrel | LB | 6-0 | 237 | 5 | Texas A&M | W-Sea-24 | FA-Buf-19 |
| 40 | Gay Jr., Willie | LB | 6-1 | 243 | 5 | Mississippi State | FA-NO-25 | D2-KC-20 |
| 53 | Goode, Cameron | LB | 6-3 | 245 | 2 | Cal | D7a-22 | D7a-Mia-22 |
| 57 | Jackson, Dequan | LB | 6-1 | 255 | 1 | Colorado State | FA-24 | FA-Jac-23 |
| 50 | Kamara, Mohamed | LB | 6-1 | 253 | 1 | Colorado State | D5-24 | D5-Mia-24 |
| 59 | McLendon, Derrick | LB | 6-4 | 250 | 1 | Colorado | FA-24 | FA-Car-24 |
| 59 | Murphy, Grayson | LB | 6-2 | 260 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 15 | Phillips, Jaelan | LB | 6-5 | 263 | 4 | Miami (Fla.) | D1b-21 | D1b-Mia-21 |
| 44 | Robinson, Chop | LB | 6-3 | 254 | 1 | Penn State | D1-24 | D1-Mia-24 |
| 41 | Tindall, Channing | LB | 6-2 | 236 | 3 | Georgia | D3-22 | D3-Mia-22 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Bonner, Ethan | CB | 6-1 | 186 | 1 | Stanford | FA-23 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 23 | Burns, Artie | CB | 6-0 | 189 | 9 | Miami | FA-Sea-25 | D1-Pit-16 |
| 22 | Campbell, Elijah | DB | 5-11 | 200 | 4 | Northern Iowa | W-NYJ-21 | FA-Cle-18 |
| 34 | Colbert, Jordan | S | 6-2 | 214 | 1 | Rhode Island | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 21 | Davis, Ashtyn | S | 6-1 | 202 | 5 | Cal | FA-NYJ-25 | D3a-NYJ-20 |
| 36 | Duck, Storm | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 1 | Louisville | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 37 | Johnson, Isaiah | CB | 6-3 | 205 | 1 | Syracuse | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 4 | Kohou, Kader | CB | 5-10 | 197 | 3 | TAMU-Commerce | FA-22 | FA-Mia-22 |
| 43 | Maitre, Jason | CB | 5-10 | 188 | 1 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 32 | McMorris, Patrick | S | 6-0 | 206 | 1 | Cal | D6b-24 | D6b-Mia-24 |
| 26 | Melifonwu, Ifeatu | S | 6-3 | 210 | 4 | Syracuse | FA-Det-25 | D3b-Det-21 |
| 5 | Ramsey, Jalen | CB | 6-1 | 208 | 9 | Florida State | T-LAR-23 | D1-Jac-16 |
| | Sheffield, Kendall | CB | 5-10 | 212 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-NYJ-25 | D4-Atl-19 |
| 24 | Smith, Cam | CB | 6-1 | 186 | 2 | South Carolina | D2-23 | D2-Mia-23 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Bailey, Jake | P | 6-2 | 212 | 6 | Stanford | FA-NE-23 | D5b-NE-19 |
| | Cardona, Joe | LS | 6-2 | 245 | 10 | Navy | FA-NE-25 | D5-NE-15 |
| 7 | Sanders, Jason | K | 5-11 | 195 | 7 | New Mexico | D7b-18 | D7b-Mia-18 |
| 49 | Stonehouse, Ryan | P | 5-10 | 193 | 3 | Colorado State | FA-Ten-25 | FA-Ten-22 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 10 | Tyreek Hill | 18 | Nick Westbrook-Ikhine |
| WR | 17 | Jaylen Waddle | 6 | Malik Washington |
| LT | 52 | Patrick Paul | 71 | Kion Smith |
| LG | 72 | Jonah Savaiinaea (R) | 74 | Liam Eichenberg |
| C | 55 | Aaron Brewer | 60 | Andrew Meyer |
| RG | 78 | James Daniels | 79 | Larry Borom |
| RT | 73 | Austin Jackson | 76 | Jackson Carman |
| TE | 9 | Jonnu Smith | 89 | Julian Hill |
| QB | 1 | Tua Tagovailoa | 0 | Zach Wilson |
| RB | 28 | De'Von Achane | 25 | Jaylen Wright |
| FB/RB | 30 | Alec Ingold | 8 | Alexander Mattison |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DT | 92 | Zach Sieler | 98 | Matt Dickerson |
| DT | 90 | Kenneth Grant (R) | 94 | Jordan Phillips (R) |
| DT | 95 | Benito Jones | 93 | Zeek Biggers (R) |
| OLB | 44 | Chop Robinson | 56 | Quinton Bell |
| ILB | 20 | Jordyn Brooks | 3 | K.J. Britt |
| ILB | 11 | Tyrel Dodson | 40 | Willie Gay Jr. |
| OLB | 15 | Jaelan Phillips | 2 | Bradley Chubb |
| CB | 5 | Jalen Ramsey | 24 | Cam Smith |
| CB | 4 | Kader Kohou | 36 | Storm Duck |
| S | 26 | Ifeatu Melifonwu | 22 | Elijah Campbell |
| S | 21 | Ashtyn Davis | 32 | Patrick McMorris |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 7 | Jason Sanders | KR | 6 | Malik Washington |
| P | 49 | Ryan Stonehouse | PR | 6 | Malik Washington |

**2.42**

Tua Tagovailoa had the fastest average time to throw in the NFL last year, at 2.42 seconds per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## DOLPHINS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kenneth Grant | DT | 6-3 | 331 | Michigan |
| 2 | Jonah Savaiinaea | G | 6-4 | 324 | Arizona |
| 5 | Jordan Phillips | DT | 6-1 | 312 | Maryland |
| 5 | Jason Marshall Jr. | CB | 6-0 | 194 | Florida |
| 5 | Dante Trader Jr. | S | 5-11 | 202 | Maryland |
| 6 | Ollie Gordon II | RB | 6-1 | 226 | Oklahoma State |
| 7 | Quinn Ewers | QB | 6-2 | 214 | Texas |
| 7 | Zeek Biggers | DT | 6-5 | 321 | Georgia Tech |

Beefing up the trenches, especially with an infusion of youth on the defensive line, was clearly an emphasis. Kenneth Grant is the centerpiece, extremely athletic at his size as a run-stuffer with an interior pass-rush presence who can complement veteran Zach Sieler. Jonah Savaiinaea was acquired in an expensive trade up, which played a part in Miami having a huge gap in the middle rounds, but it speaks to the belief the Dolphins have that he fits in as a versatile lineman who can start at guard. With a need at cornerback, the team didn't draft one until the fifth round. Running back Ollie Gordon II could be an interesting candidate for a team that needs a power-running element, and quarterback Quinn Ewers fits the offense, having played in a similar scheme at Texas.

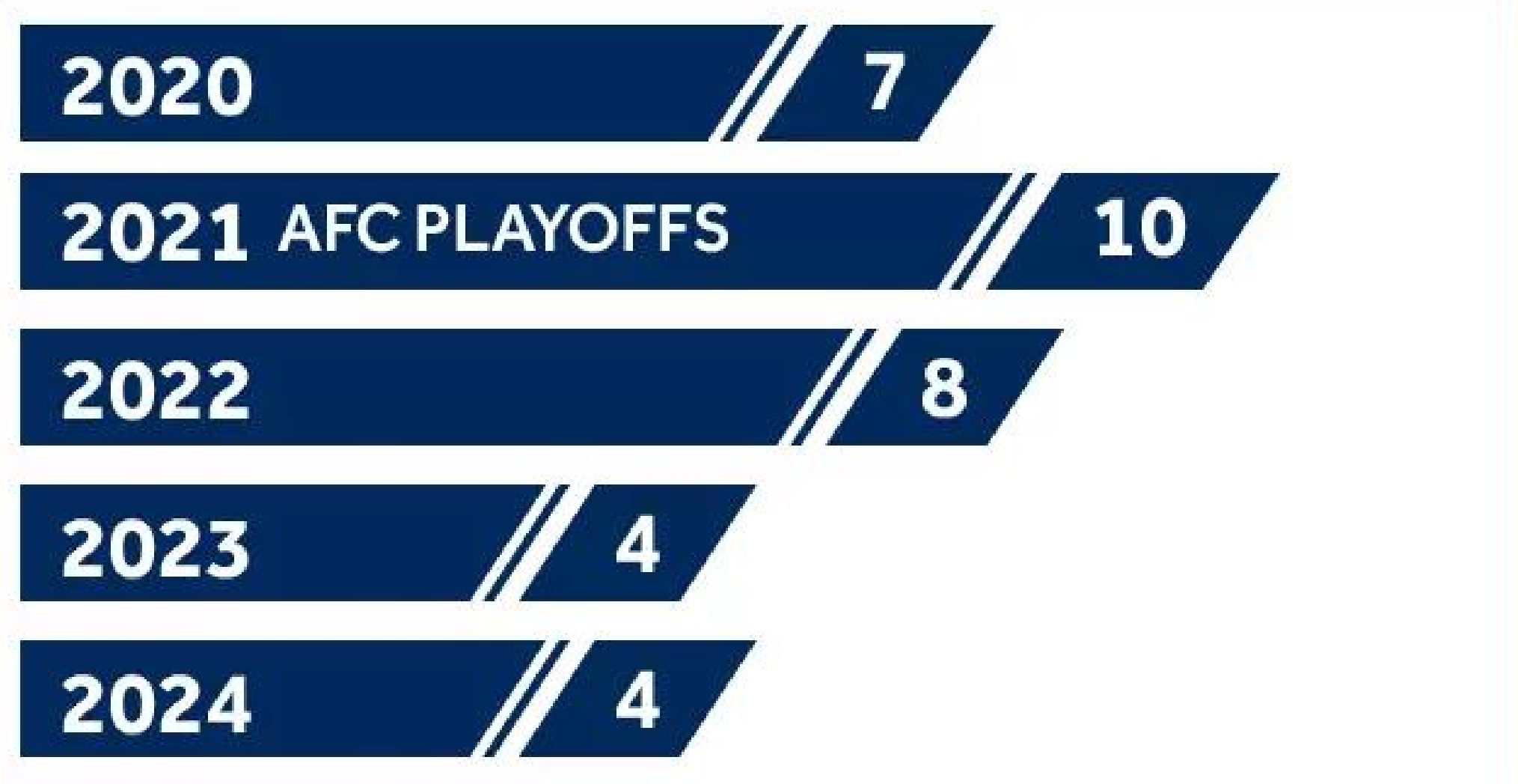
# PATRIOTS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Las Vegas | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Miami | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Carolina | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at Buffalo | 8:20 |
| Oct. 12 | at New Orleans | 4:25 |
| Oct. 19 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Nov. 13 | N.Y. Jets | 8:15 |
| Nov. 23 | at Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Dec. 1 | N.Y. Giants | 8:15 |
| Dec. 7 | BYE | |
| Dec. 14 | Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| TBD | Miami | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Mike Vrabel
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** 54-45
**Offensive Coordinator:** Josh McDaniels
**Defensive Coordinator:** Terrell Williams
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Jeremy Springer
**Quarterbacks:** Ashton Grant
**Running Backs:** Tony Dews
**Wide Receivers:** Todd Downing
**Tight Ends/Passing Game Coordinator:** Thomas Brown
**Offensive Line:** Doug Marrone
**Defensive Line:** Clint McMillan
**Inside Linebackers:** Zak Kuhr
**Outside Linebackers:** Mike Smith
**Cornerbacks:** Justin Hamilton
**Safeties:** Scott Booker

AFC EAST FORECAST
4

The New England Patriots didn't undergo a *complete* makeover this offseason, but it's safe to say that head coach Mike Vrabel and de facto general manager Eliot Wolf just about tore the franchise down to the studs — quarterback Drake Maye, cornerback Christian Gonzalez and some other foundational elements — with the hope of building back another championship team in its place.

Vrabel takes over from another former New England linebacker in Jerod Mayo, who went 4-13 in his one season at the helm while proving to be the latest example of "Don't be the guy who follows the guy." As a result, the post-Bill Belichick hangover still lingers over this franchise, but the shadow of the old coach doesn't loom as large as it once did.

The Patriots were hyper-aggressive in free agency, landing blue-chip talent and high-character locker room guys on both sides of the ball. They weren't shy about parting with established veterans, getting rid of some of their last links to the Super Bowl era. And they went hard in the draft, going after help for Maye and creating another layer of depth on all three levels of defense.

The result? A sense of guarded optimism. That, mixed with Vrabel's brand of swagger and enthusiasm for the rebuild, has created a heightened sense of expectation. Only one team has won fewer games than the Patriots since the start of the 2023 season, so there's nowhere to go but up, right?

"We all want to win. That's why we're here," Vrabel says. "That's why I got hired; it's to win, to put a product on the field [fans] can be excited about, that they can care about, and they can support. Like, that's the whole goal. And I don't think they should have to wait very long."

## OFFENSE

Vrabel brought back offensive coordinator Josh McDaniels, who has been charged with guiding Maye and the rest of the New England attack. The third overall pick in 2024, Maye underwent his share of growing pains as a rookie thanks in large part to a woeful offensive line and a lack of skill-position players around him. If McDaniels can figure out a way to get Maye to the next level, it'll represent a sizable step in the right direction for one of the worst offenses in the league last year.

One thing that will help is a retooled offensive line. The Patriots started 12 different offensive linemen last year, two shy of the all-time record. They landed veteran offensive linemen Morgan Moses (right tackle), Wes Schweitzer (guard) and Garrett Bradbury (center) in free agency. The hope is they can fit with some of the holdovers like Mike Onwenu (right guard) and Cole Strange (left guard), as well as rookies Will Campbell (left tackle) and Jared Wilson (center).

When it comes to the skill-position players, they shored up the receiving corps with veterans Stefon Diggs and Mack Hollins and rookie Kyle Williams. That group, as well as holdovers Kendrick Bourne, DeMario Douglas, Kayshon Boutte, Ja'Lynn Polk and Javon Baker, will engage in some of the fiercest position battles on the roster. Most teams usually lean on six receivers, which means two familiar faces won't be around when the season begins.

There's also a spicy position battle brewing at running back, as second-round pick TreVeyon Henderson will fight with established vets Rhamondre Stevenson and Antonio Gibson for reps this season. The one area that will likely remain status quo is tight end, where Hunter Henry (one of Maye's favorite targets in 2024) and Austin Hooper deliver an adequate 1-2 punch.

**DRAKE MAYE**
QUARTERBACK

DAVID BUTLER II-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

On defense, Vrabel and new coordinator Terrell Williams have changed the scheme — and personnel. For years under Belichick — as well as last year's plan with Mayo — the Patriots' defensive linemen were more about occupying space in a 3-4 alignment to free things up for the linebackers. Now, they're eying a more attacking, disruptive playing style, particularly for the defensive line.

But at the end of the day, a lot of the success or failure of this defense will hinge on the health and continued development of two players: Gonzalez and defensive lineman Christian Barmore. Gonzalez has emerged as a No. 1 corner, capable of putting the clamps on elite receivers on a regular basis. Meanwhile, Barmore was sidelined for much of last year with blood clot issues. If he can return at 100%, his ability to get after opposing passers while remaining stout against the run would bring an added three-down dimension to the defense that no one else on the roster can match.

In addition, free-agent pickups Milton Williams and Khyiris Tonga, as well as Barmore and fourth-round pick Joshua Farmer, should make for a beefed-up interior that will keep offensive line coaches busy game-planning. Edge defenders like Keion White, Harold Landry III and Anfernee Jennings are expected to round out the bulk of the defensive front.

Linebacker Robert Spillane and cornerbacks Gonzalez and Carlton Davis III, a free-agent pickup from Detroit, figure to lead the second level. Safety has remained the most stable position for New England the last few seasons, and that should be the case again with veterans Jabrill Peppers and Kyle Dugger.

## SPECIALISTS

When it comes to special teams, changes are coming, as the rookie long-snapper Julian Ashby replaces veteran Joe Cardona and rookie kicker Andres Borregales steps in for Joey Slye. Punter Bruce Baringer and gunner Brenden Schooler remain; the duo were the best and most consistent part of the Patriots' special teams units the last two seasons. Gibson and reserve cornerback Marcus Jones will be involved on returns.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

So much hinges on a few key elements: Maye's continued growth. The ability of Campbell to handle the responsibilities of the left tackle spot. If Barmore can return at 100% after a bout with blood clots. The truth of the matter is that if the Patriots aren't able to answer those questions, they could be bound for another four-win season and more instability.

But if everything breaks right and the Patriots stay healthy, eight or nine wins aren't out of the question, given the schedule and improved roster. That would represent a step in the right direction for a franchise that aims to return to greatness sooner rather than later.

"We have to improve. I mean, I think that's the goal," Vrabel says. "Our expectations aren't going to change; it's going to be to win the division, it's going to be host playoff games, and it's going to be to compete for championships. So we're never going to put a timetable or any sort of prediction on when that may happen. But it has to happen.

"We're going to build a program, we're going to have a foundation, we're going to give them something to believe in and be proud of. And hopefully, they are able to hold each other accountable to that standard."

## 2024 RESULTS (4-13)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Cincinnati | W | 16-10 |
| Sept. | 15 | Seattle (ot) | L | 20-23 |
| Sept. | 19 | at N.Y. Jets | L | 3-24 |
| Sept. | 29 | at San Francisco | L | 13-30 |
| Oct. | 6 | Miami | L | 10-15 |
| Oct. | 13 | Houston | L | 21-41 |
| Oct. | 20 | Jacksonville | L | 16-32 |
| Oct. | 27 | N.Y. Jets | W | 25-22 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Tennessee (ot) | L | 17-20 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Chicago | W | 19-3 |
| Nov. | 17 | L.A. Rams | L | 22-28 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Miami | L | 15-34 |
| Dec. | 1 | Indianapolis | L | 24-25 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Arizona | L | 17-30 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Buffalo | L | 21-24 |
| Dec. | 28 | L.A. Chargers | L | 7-40 |
| Jan. | 5 | Buffalo | W | 23-16 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 292.0 | 31 | 16 |
| Rushing | 115.8 | 13 | 5 |
| Passing | 176.2 | 32 | 16 |
| Scoring | 17.0 | 30 | 15 |
| Third Down % | 34.9 | 29 | 14 |
| Points/Play | 0.281 | 30 | 15 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 342.9 | 22 | 13 |
| Rushing | 131.4 | 23 | 13 |
| Passing | 211.5 | 10 | 6 |
| Scoring | 24.5 | 22 | 10 |
| Interceptions | 7 | T26 | T13 |
| Sacks | 28 | 32 | 16 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.390 | 22 | 12 |
| TO Differential | -11 | 28 | 13 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Drake Maye | 338 | 225 | 2,276 | 15 | 10 |
| Jacoby Brissett | 161 | 95 | 826 | 2 | 1 |

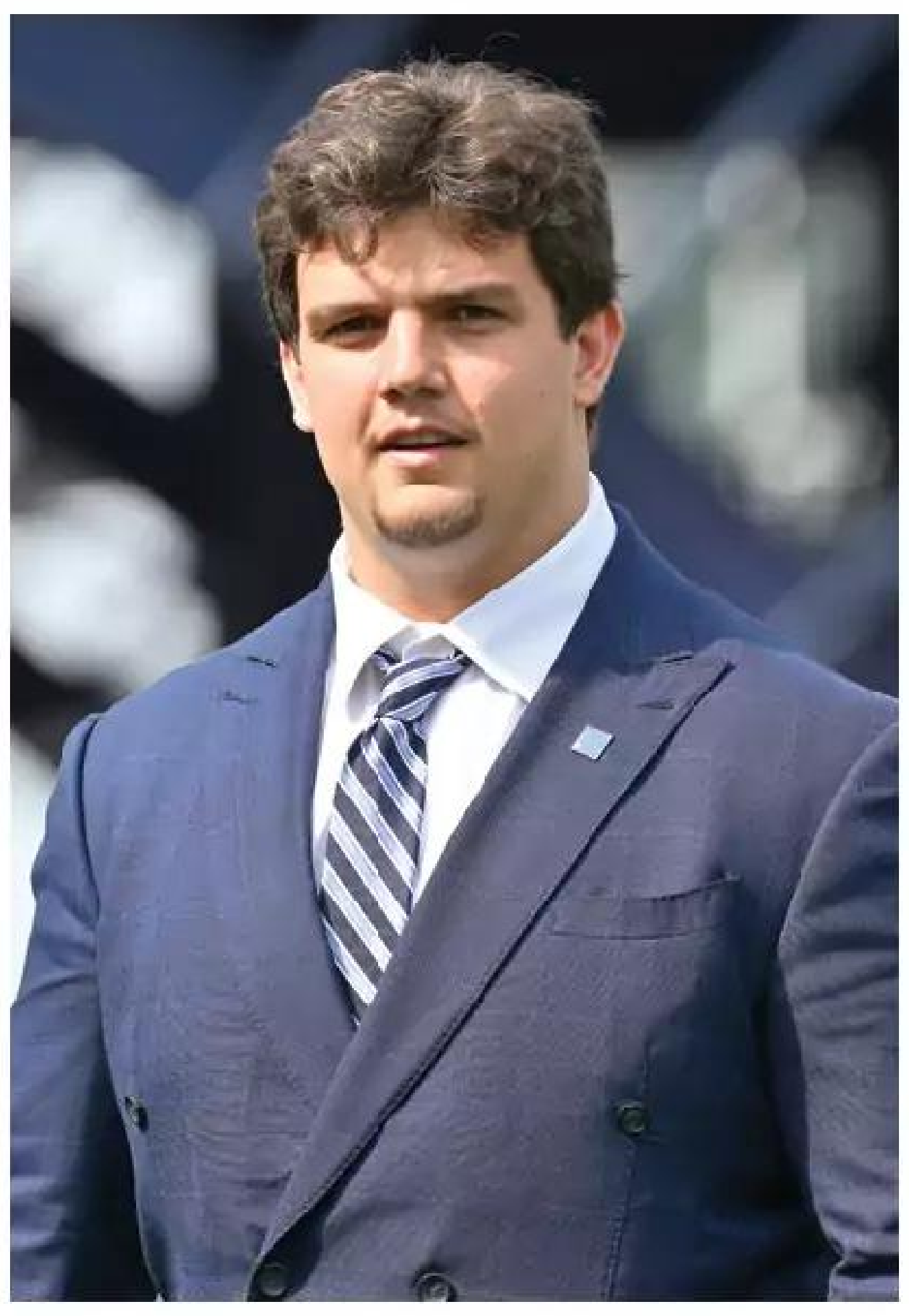
| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rhamondre Stevenson | 207 | 801 | 3.9 | 7 |
| Antonio Gibson | 120 | 538 | 4.5 | 1 |
| Drake Maye | 54 | 421 | 7.8 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hunter Henry | 66 | 674 | 10.2 | 2 |
| DeMario Douglas | 66 | 621 | 9.4 | 3 |
| Austin Hooper | 45 | 476 | 10.6 | 3 |
| Kayshon Boutte | 43 | 589 | 13.7 | 3 |
| Rhamondre Stevenson | 33 | 168 | 5.1 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Joey Slye, 26-33 FGs, 25-26 PATs, 103 points
**TACKLES:** Jahlani Tavai, 115; Kyle Dugger, 81
**SACKS:** Keion White, 5.0; Deatrich Wise Jr., 5.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Christian Gonzalez, 2; 5 players tied with 1

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**CAMPBELL DELIVERS KO** One of the things that clinched the choice of **Will Campbell** for the Patriots at No. 4 overall? When head coach Mike Vrabel went head-to-head with him during a pre-draft visit to the Campbell home in Louisiana. The head coach armed himself with a blocking pad over his chest and directed the prospect in a drill — and then, Campbell knocked him down. "Yeah, I mean, I got him," Campbell said with a smile after he was taken by the Patriots. "I'm not going to lie; I got him on the ground." "I hope that tape never sees the light of day," Vrabel says. "I think it was important for me to get out there, feel them and feel every player that we evaluated at the line of scrimmage."



**NO MINOR CHOICE** Kobee Minor, a defensive back out of Memphis, was the final pick in the 2025 NFL Draft, this year's "Mr. Irrelevant." It's the third time the Patriots have made that selection; Marty Moore, a linebacker out of Kentucky, was the first, in 1994. Moore offered some advice for Minor. "First off, congratulations to him on just getting drafted. That's the most important thing," said Moore, who played eight years in the NFL, seven with the Patriots. "The next thing? Wear that badge with some honor. The people in Boston will love you if you do that. Embrace it."

**MR. SMITH GOES TO FOXBOROUGH** Outside linebackers coach Mike Smith is in his first year as a New England assistant, but he has a previous connection to the Patriots; former New England receiver Wes Welker was the best man at his wedding. Smith says their relationship goes back to their days together at Texas Tech. "At Texas Tech, they gave the athletes the corner rooms in the dorms, and I remember for a couple of weeks there was nobody across the hallway," he says. "Then one day, I see this little tiny little kid down there, [and I thought] 'I guess they didn't get it to a football player. And I go down there and it's Wes Welker."

# SCOUTING THE PATRIOTS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ENGLAND

"There's a new sheriff in town with Mike Vrabel taking over after the Jerod Mayo experiment was a failure. Vrabel is a tough boss, but he relates well to players, and they play their butts off for him. He's a real leader and has the credibility it takes to win over the locker room. … Drake Maye has every skill set to be a legit franchise quarterback. The game wasn't too big for him as a rookie, even without the right kind of personnel around him. … Will Campbell is a plug-and-play left tackle. We didn't care about his arm length at all. That was overblown completely by the draft nerds. … Stefon Diggs is way ahead of schedule in the ACL rehab, and he showed last year he's still got a lot left in the tank. … Mack Hollins is very tough to stop on contested catches and is a big-time blocker. … Garrett Bradbury represents a band-aid at center, but they had to do something and get someone experienced. … A move that flew under the radar that I think is going to really help them from a playing and leadership standpoint: right tackle Morgan Moses. … Few pure corners out there with the ball skills and athleticism that Christian Gonzalez has. Pairing him with Carlton Davis III is an excellent tandem. … Robert Spillane delivers a lot of sticks at linebacker. Predicting the New England fan base will love him. … That's a lot of money they paid Milton Williams, but I think he's gonna be worth every penny. … They've got the makings of a pretty good front seven with Christian Barmore and Harold Landry III. … Jabrill Peppers is a good football player. If he's got his head on straight, they can bank on him at safety."

ERIC CANHA-IMAGN IMAGES

## 2025 PATRIOTS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Dobbs, Joshua | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 8 | Tennessee | FA-SF-25 | D4-Pit-17 |
| 10 | Maye, Drake | QB | 6-4 | 225 | 1 | North Carolina | D1-24 | D1-NE-24 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Gibson, Antonio | RB | 6-0 | 228 | 5 | Memphis | FA-Was-24 | D3-Was-20 |
| 26 | Jennings, Terrell | RB | 6-0 | 217 | 1 | Florida A&M | FA-24 | FA-NE-24 |
| 38 | Stevenson, Rhamondre | RB | 6-0 | 227 | 4 | Oklahoma | D4-21 | D4-NE-21 |
| | Williams, Trayveon | RB | 5-8 | 210 | 6 | Texas A&M | FA-Cin-25 | D6a-Cin-19 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Baker, Javon | WR | 6-1 | 202 | 1 | UCF | D4b-24 | D4b-NE-24 |
| 88 | Bell, Jaheim | TE | 6-2 | 241 | 1 | Florida State | D7-24 | D7-NE-24 |
| 84 | Bourne, Kendrick | WR | 6-1 | 205 | 8 | Eastern Washington | FA-SF-21 | FA-SF-17 |
| 9 | Boutte, Kayshon | WR | 5-11 | 197 | 2 | LSU | D6a-23 | D6a-NE-23 |
| 8 | Diggs, Stefon | WR | 6-0 | 191 | 10 | Maryland | FA-Hou-25 | D5b-Min-15 |
| 3 | Douglas, DeMario | WR | 5-8 | 192 | 2 | Liberty | D6c-23 | D6c-NE-23 |
| 85 | Henry, Hunter | TE | 6-5 | 249 | 9 | Arkansas | FA-LAC-21 | D2-LAC-16 |
| 13 | Hollins, Mack | WR | 6-4 | 221 | 8 | North Carolina | FA-Buf-25 | D4-Phi-17 |
| 81 | Hooper, Austin | TE | 6-4 | 254 | 9 | Stanford | FA-LV-24 | D3-Atl-16 |
| 83 | Jiles, John | WR | 6-3 | 220 | 1 | West Florida | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 1 | Polk, Ja'Lynn | WR | 6-1 | 203 | 1 | Washington | D2-24 | D2-NE-24 |
| 87 | Westover, Jack | TE | 6-2 | 245 | 1 | Washington | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 55 | Bradbury, Garrett | C | 6-3 | 300 | 6 | NC State | FA-Min-25 | D1-Min-19 |
| 77 | Brown, Ben | C | 6-5 | 313 | 3 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | FA-Cin-22 |
| 61 | Cotton, Lester | G | 6-4 | 325 | 4 | Alabama | W-Mia-24 | FA-LV-19 |
| 75 | Jacobs, Demontrey | T | 6-6 | 315 | 1 | South Florida | W-Den-24 | FA-Den-23 |
| 59 | Lowe, Vederian | T | 6-5 | 315 | 3 | Illinois | T-Min-23 | D6a-Min-22 |
| 76 | Moses, Morgan | T | 6-6 | 320 | 10 | Virginia | FA-NYJ-25 | D3a-Was-14 |
| 71 | Onwenu, Mike | OL | 6-3 | 350 | 5 | Michigan | D6a-20 | D6a-NE-20 |
| 64 | Robinson, Layden | G | 6-3 | 311 | 1 | Texas A&M | D4a-24 | D4a-NE-24 |
| 65 | Robinson, Tyrese | G | 6-3 | 319 | 1 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 72 | Schweitzer, Wes | OL | 6-4 | 300 | 9 | San José State | FA-NYJ-24 | D6-Atl-16 |
| 62 | Sow, Sidy | G | 6-5 | 318 | 2 | Eastern Michigan | D4c-23 | D4c-NE-23 |
| 69 | Strange, Cole | G | 6-5 | 310 | 3 | Chattanooga | D1-22 | D1-NE-22 |
| 70 | Wallace, Caedan | T | 6-5 | 314 | 1 | Penn State | D3-24 | D3-NE-24 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 90 | Barmore, Christian | DL | 6-5 | 315 | 4 | Alabama | D2-21 | D2-NE-21 |
| | Iton, Isaiah | DL | 6-2 | 277 | 1 | Rutgers | FA-25 | FA-Ten-24 |
| 96 | Johnson II, Eric | DT | 6-4 | 320 | 3 | Missouri State | W-Ind-24 | D5-Ind-22 |
| 54 | Jones, Truman | DE | 6-3 | 255 | 1 | Harvard | FA-24 | FA-KC-23 |
| 98 | Pharms Jr., Jeremiah | DT | 6-2 | 300 | 2 | Friends | FA-23 | FA-NE-22 |
| 94 | Roy, Jaquelin | DT | 6-3 | 305 | 2 | LSU | FA-24 | D5-Min-23 |
| 95 | Tonga, Khyiris | DT | 6-4 | 338 | 4 | BYU | FA-Ari-25 | D7-Chi-21 |
| 97 | Williams, Milton | DT | 6-3 | 290 | 4 | Louisiana Tech | FA-Phi-25 | D3-Phi-21 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | Chaisson, K'Lavon | LB | 6-3 | 245 | 5 | LSU | FA-LV-25 | D1-Jac-20 |
| 53 | Elliss, Christian | LB | 6-2 | 231 | 3 | Idaho | W-Phi-23 | FA-Min-21 |
| 51 | Gibbens, Jack | LB | 6-3 | 242 | 2 | Minnesota | FA-Ten-25 | FA-Ten-22 |
| 33 | Jennings, Anfernee | LB | 6-2 | 255 | 5 | Alabama | D3a-20 | D3a-NE-20 |
| 2 | Landry III, Harold | LB | 6-2 | 252 | 7 | Boston College | FA-Ten-25 | D2-Ten-18 |
| 15 | Mapu, Marte | LB | 6-3 | 230 | 2 | Sacramento State | D3-23 | D3-NE-23 |
| 45 | Rice, Monty | LB | 6-0 | 233 | 4 | Georgia | FA-24 | D3-Ten-21 |
| 14 | Spillane, Robert | LB | 6-1 | 229 | 6 | Western Michigan | FA-LV-25 | FA-Ten-18 |
| 48 | Tavai, Jahlani | LB | 6-2 | 255 | 6 | Hawai'i | FA-21 | D2-Det-19 |
| 99 | White, Keion | LB | 6-5 | 285 | 2 | Georgia Tech | D2-23 | D2-NE-23 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Austin, Alex | CB | 6-1 | 191 | 2 | Oregon State | FA-23 | D7-Buf-23 |
| 35 | Battle, Miles | CB | 6-3 | 197 | 1 | Utah | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 29 | Bolden, Isaiah | CB | 6-2 | 205 | 2 | Jackson State | D7-23 | D7-NE-23 |
| 7 | Davis III, Carlton | CB | 6-1 | 202 | 7 | Auburn | FA-Det-25 | D2c-TB-18 |
| 27 | Dial Jr., Marcellas | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | South Carolina | D6a-24 | D6a-NE-24 |
| 23 | Dugger, Kyle | S | 6-1 | 216 | 5 | Lenoir-Rhyne | D2a-20 | D2a-NE-20 |
| 22 | Epps, Marcus | S | 6-0 | 191 | 6 | Wyoming | FA-LV-25 | D6-Min-19 |
| 0 | Gonzalez, Christian | CB | 6-1 | 205 | 2 | Oregon | D1-23 | D1-NE-23 |
| 21 | Hawkins, Jaylinn | S | 6-1 | 208 | 5 | California | FA-LAC-24 | D4b-Atl-20 |
| 30 | James, D.J. | CB | 6-0 | 184 | 1 | Auburn | FA-24 | D6-Sea-24 |
| 25 | Jones, Marcus | CB | 5-8 | 188 | 3 | Houston | D3-22 | D3-NE-22 |
| 5 | Peppers, Jabrill | S | 5-11 | 217 | 8 | Michigan | FA-NYG-22 | D1b-Cle-17 |
| 24 | Pettus, Dell | S | 5-11 | 200 | 1 | Troy | FA-24 | FA-NE-24 |
| 41 | Schooler, Brenden | S | 6-2 | 210 | 3 | Texas | FA-22 | FA-NE-22 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Baringer, Bryce | P | 6-2 | 215 | 2 | Michigan State | D6b-23 | D6b-NE-23 |
| 11 | Romo, John Parker | K | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Virginia Tech | FA-24 | FA-NO-22 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 8 | Stefon Diggs | 9 | Kayshon Boutte |
| WR | 3 | DeMario Douglas | 18 | Kyle Williams (R) |
| WR | 84 | Kendrick Bourne | 13 | Mack Hollins |
| LT | 66 | Will Campbell (R) | 59 | Vederian Lowe |
| LG | 69 | Cole Strange | 64 | Layden Robinson |
| C | 55 | Garrett Bradbury | 77 | Ben Brown |
| RG | 71 | Mike Onwenu | 72 | Wes Schweitzer |
| RT | 76 | Morgan Moses | 70 | Caedan Wallace |
| TE | 85 | Hunter Henry | 81 | Austin Hooper |
| QB | 10 | Drake Maye | 11 | Joshua Dobbs |
| RB | 38 | Rhamondre Stevenson | 32 | TreVeyon Henderson (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DL | 97 | Milton Williams | 92 | Joshua Farmer (R) |
| DT | 95 | Khyiris Tonga | 96 | Eric Johnson II |
| DL | 90 | Christian Barmore | 98 | Jeremiah Pharms Jr. |
| OLB | 2 | Harold Landry III | 99 | Keion White |
| ILB | 48 | Jahlani Tavai | 53 | Christian Elliss |
| ILB | 14 | Robert Spillane | 15 | Marte Mapu |
| OLB | 33 | Anfernee Jennings | 44 | K'Lavon Chaisson |
| CB | 7 | Carlton Davis III | 25 | Marcus Jones |
| CB | 0 | Christian Gonzalez | 28 | Alex Austin |
| SS | 23 | Kyle Dugger | 21 | Jaylinn Hawkins |
| FS | 5 | Jabrill Peppers | 41 | Brenden Schooler |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 36 | Andres Borregales (R) | KR | 4 | Antonio Gibson |
| P | 17 | Bryce Baringer | PR | 25 | Marcus Jones |

**46.8%**

The Patriots scored a touchdown on just 22 of their 47 red zone trips (46.8%), the third-lowest rate in the NFL.

## PATRIOTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Will Campbell | OT | 6-6 | 319 | LSU |
| 2 | TreVeyon Henderson | RB | 5-10 | 202 | Ohio State |
| 3 | Kyle Williams | WR | 5-11 | 190 | Washington State |
| 3 | Jared Wilson | C | 6-3 | 310 | Georgia |
| 4 | Craig Woodson | S | 6-0 | 200 | Cal |
| 4 | Joshua Farmer | DT | 6-3 | 312 | Florida State |
| 5 | Bradyn Swinson | Edge | 6-4 | 255 | LSU |
| 6 | Andres Borregales | K | 5-11 | 202 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 7 | Marcus Bryant | OT | 6-7 | 320 | Missouri |
| 7 | Julian Ashby | LS | 6-1 | 231 | Vanderbilt |
| 7 | Kobee Minor | DB | 5-11 | 188 | Memphis |

Despite some concerns about arm length, Will Campbell figures to slot in as the starting left tackle. Given New England's struggles to find consistency when it comes to skill-position players the last couple of years, TreVeyon Henderson and Kyle Williams could jump right into positional battles at running back and wide receiver in their first seasons in the league. On the other side of the ball, Joshua Farmer and Bradyn Swinson could be important depth adds on the defense, while Kobee Minor is the third "Mr. Irrelevant" in franchise history. Andres Borregales and Julian Ashby figure to give New England a new look on special teams.

# NY JETS

AFC EAST FORECAST

3

Aaron Glenn is bringing a simple mission to the New York Jets. "I'm a huge believer in just moving in silence," he says.

After all the drama of the past two seasons with quarterback Aaron Rodgers, Glenn has vowed to get back to basics as head coach Robert Saleh's replacement. Glenn, hired just before new general manager Darren Mougey this offseason, wants to build a physical team with a run-focused offense while steering clear of big-splash additions like Rodgers.

In other words: Less talk, more action.

Glenn decided to cut Rodgers following last year's chaotic 5-12 season, hoping to turn down the volume as the Jets embrace a deliberate rebuild and let Glenn carry out his vision — just like they did with Bill Parcells during his mostly successful three seasons in the late 1990s.

Glenn, a Parcells disciple, inherits a team that has missed the playoffs for 14 straight seasons — the longest active drought in major North American professional sports. But as the Detroit Lions' defensive coordinator the past four years, he experienced a successful rebuild.

He knows how it's done. Now comes the harder part — overhauling the Jets' culture with his no-frills style and making this long-suffering team a winner.

## OFFENSE

The Jets decided to cut not just Rodgers but also his favorite target, wide receiver Davante Adams, as they move away from expensive veterans and try to mold younger players. So where does that leave their offense?

Well, new quarterback Justin Fields — who got just a two-year commitment in free agency — will provide dynamic running skills, though his passing ability remains questionable coming off last season's benching in Pittsburgh.

That's not the only reason this Jets offense probably won't lean on explosiveness. Garrett Wilson is a superb receiver, but with Adams gone, there are no sure-thing options to draw coverage away from him. Other than Fields, the Jets made no major free-agent additions to their offense. Their top non-Wilson receivers are Allen Lazard, Tyler Johnson and Josh Reynolds — all of whom present more questions than answers in the passing game.

Still, that trio will battle to determine who is Fields' second option behind Wilson. Ultimately, that could be tight end Mason Taylor, the team's second-round pick who has a strong chance to replace the underwhelming Jeremy Ruckert atop the depth chart.

Meanwhile, Glenn is trying to build a powerful offensive line like the Lions have and win with a forceful rushing attack. He has a motivated running back in Breece Hall, who is entering a contract year following a frustrating season.

Hall wants to show Glenn that he doesn't need a by-committee backfield — and that he can carry the load without significant help from second-year pros Braelon Allen and Isaiah Davis. Hall must do a better job of fighting through contact than he did in 2024, when he averaged a career-low three yards post-hit.

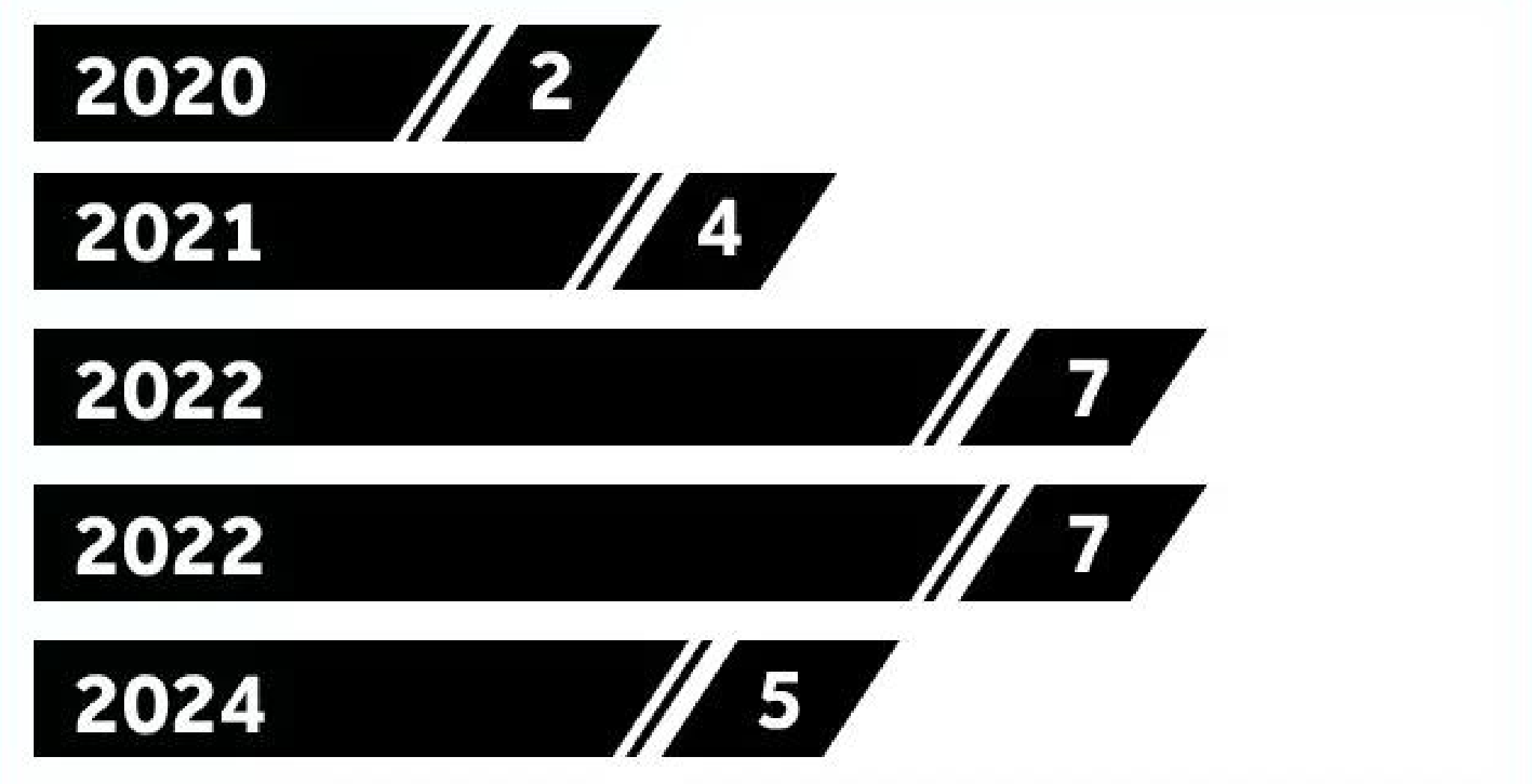
Glenn likes what he has up front. But left tackle Olu Fashanu — last year's 11th overall pick — has yet to prove he can be a long-term solution. The Jets' interior line should not be a problem, as long as right guard Alijah Vera-Tucker stays healthy — something he has struggled to do. The line's biggest question: Is Armand Membou, just drafted at No. 7 overall, ready to be a Day 1 starting right tackle? His pass-blocking reach remains a concern.

### 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Sept. 29 | at Miami | 7:15 |
| Oct. 5 | Dallas | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | Denver (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 19 | Carolina | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | BYE | |
| Nov. 9 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Nov. 13 | at New England | 8:15 |
| Nov. 23 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | Miami | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | New England | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Buffalo | |

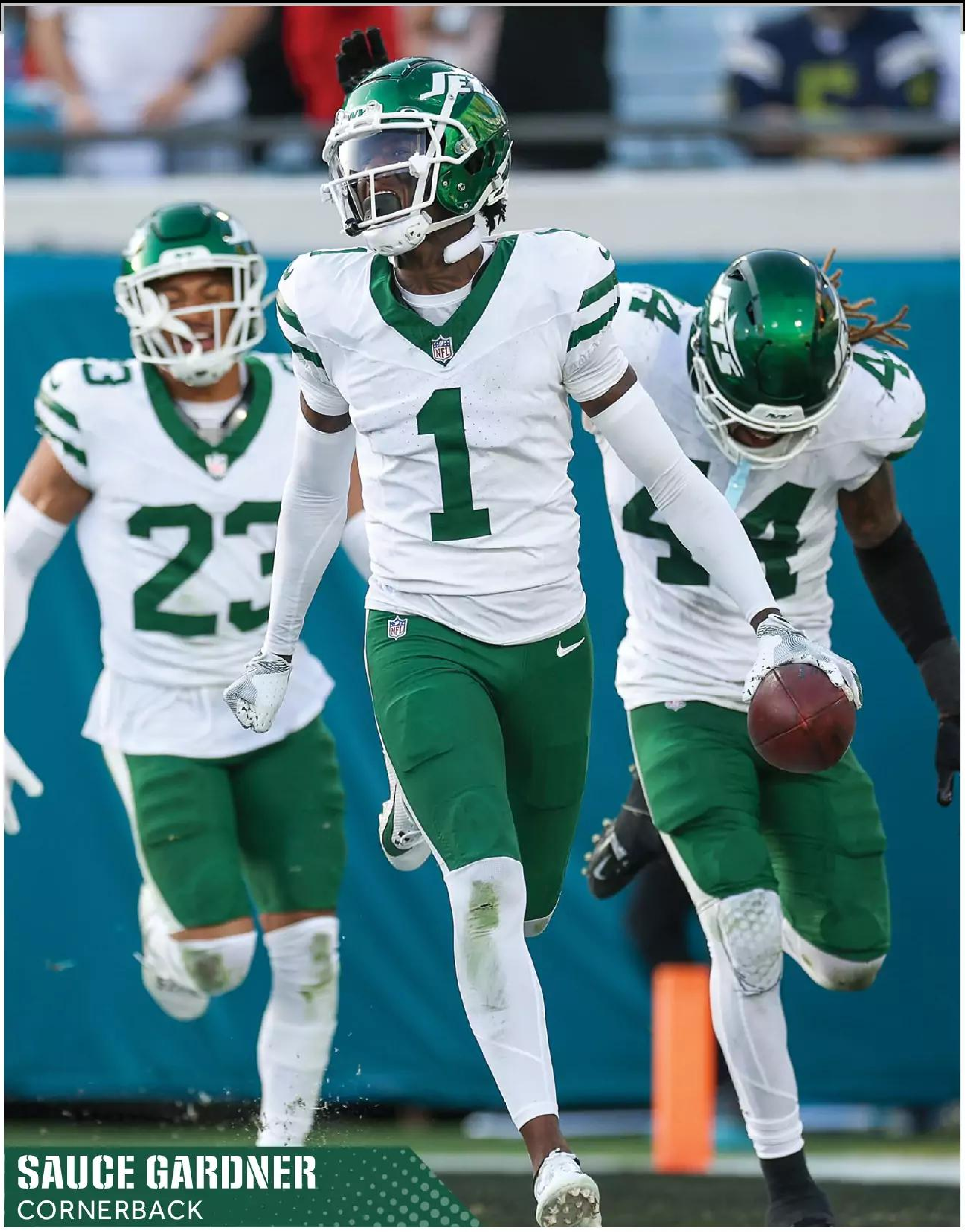
*All times Eastern*

### FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



### THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Aaron Glenn
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** First season
**Offensive Coordinator:** Tanner Engstrand
**Defensive Coordinator:** Steve Wilks
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Chris Banjo
**Quarterbacks:** Charles London
**Running Backs:** Nic McKissic-Luke
**Wide Receivers:** Shawn Jefferson
**Tight Ends:** Jeff Blasko
**Offensive Line:** Steve Heiden
**Senior Assistant/Pass Game Coordinator:** Scott Turner
**Defensive Line:** Eric Washington
**Linebackers:** Aaron Curry
**Defensive Backs/Pass Game Coordinator:** Chris Harris



**SAUCE GARDNER**
CORNERBACK

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

As questions linger about how exactly the Jets will score points, they will lean on their defense — and especially on their front, which is their best overall position group. The Jets' defensive line, led by tackle Quinnen Williams, figures to set the tone for whatever success this team experiences by carrying out Glenn's tough brand of football.

Beyond Williams, who has made the Pro Bowl the past three seasons, the two biggest keys are edge rushers Jermaine Johnson and Will McDonald IV, first-round picks in 2022 and 2023, respectively. McDonald could get paid big money next offseason if he exceeds his 10.5-sack showing from last year. Johnson, a Pro Bowler in 2023, needs to show that he has regained his burst after tearing his Achilles tendon in Week 2 last season.

Glenn and his seasoned coordinator, Steve Wilks, are sticking with the 4-3 scheme that Saleh used, even as the personnel changes. Gone is middle linebacker C.J. Mosley, a valuable leader, replaced by fifth-year pro Jamien Sherwood, who just re-signed with the Jets on a lucrative second contract. Will he possess Mosley's demanding presence? On the field, though, Mosley had become a declining, injury-plagued player, so it made sense for the Jets to cut him this offseason. Sherwood is a legit, long-term solution at a critically important position. He is solid in coverage and great against the run.

Yet if the Jets are going to regain their status as an elite defense — one that is capable of carrying a grind-it-out offense — they will need No. 1 cornerback Sauce Gardner to return to the elite form he showed in his first two seasons, 2022 and '23. The Jets finished second and first in Pro Football Focus' defensive ratings those years — then dropped to 25th last year.

Gardner struggled with inconsistent coverage and terrible tackling in 2024, after opening his career with back-to-back first-team All-Pro selections. If he can clean up those issues, he will cash in next offseason. He leads a secondary that'll have Brandon Stephens and third-round pick Azareye'h Thomas battling for the corner spot vacated by D.J. Reed, who signed with the Lions.

## SPECIALISTS

The Jets — who figure to be a low-scoring group — can't afford for 37-year-old kicker Greg Zuerlein to struggle like he did last season, when he made 9-of-15 field goals while playing in only eight games. They need him to be a legit weapon.

The Jets cut veteran punter Thomas Morstead after the draft, leaving them with two punters who have never appeared in an NFL game — second-year pro Austin McNamara and undrafted rookie Kai Kroeger. It could become an issue as the Jets try to grind out field-position battles.

Xavier Gipson handled punt and kickoff returns the past two seasons but could face challengers this year.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

This probably won't be the year the Jets break their playoff drought. But it could be the season their beaten-down fans look back on as the moment Glenn started turning the tide. He is trying to put his stamp on this team in his first head-coaching opportunity at age 53. He has roster flexibility because he didn't make expensive, long-term commitments to free agents. He can use 2025 to assess and build for the future.

His biggest question is at quarterback, where he got a relatively affordable lottery ticket in Fields. If Fields fails, the Jets will draft a quarterback again in 2026. But if he somehow thrives, that would be a massively important foundational piece for Glenn's rebuild.

## 2024 RESULTS (5-12)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. 9 | at San Francisco | L | 19-32 |
| Sept. 15 | at Tennessee | W | 24-17 |
| Sept. 19 | New England | W | 24-3 |
| Sept. 29 | Denver | L | 9-10 |
| Oct. 6 | Minnesota | L | 17-23 |
| Oct. 14 | Buffalo | L | 20-23 |
| Oct. 20 | at Pittsburgh | L | 15-37 |
| Oct. 27 | at New England | L | 22-25 |
| Oct. 31 | Houston | W | 21-13 |
| Nov. 10 | at Arizona | L | 6-31 |
| Nov. 17 | Indianapolis | L | 27-28 |
| Dec. 1 | Seattle | L | 21-26 |
| Dec. 8 | at Miami (ot) | L | 26-32 |
| Dec. 15 | at Jacksonville | W | 32-25 |
| Dec. 22 | L.A. Rams | L | 9-19 |
| Dec. 29 | at Buffalo | L | 14-40 |
| Jan. 5 | at Miami | W | 32-20 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 310.3 | 24 | 11 |
| Rushing | 91.8 | 31 | 15 |
| Passing | 218.5 | 16 | 7 |
| Scoring | 19.9 | T24 | 11 |
| Third Down % | 39.5 | T14 | T7 |
| Points/Play | 0.335 | 22 | 10 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 313.8 | 3 | 2 |
| Rushing | 121.1 | 17 | 10 |
| Passing | 192.6 | 4 | 2 |
| Scoring | 23.8 | 20 | 9 |
| Interceptions | 7 | T26 | T13 |
| Sacks | 43 | T11 | 5 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.378 | 19 | 9 |
| TO Differential | -2 | T16 | 9 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aaron Rodgers | 584 | 368 | 3,897 | 28 | 11 |
| Tyrod Taylor | 22 | 17 | 119 | 3 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Breece Hall | 209 | 876 | 4.2 | 5 |
| Braelon Allen | 92 | 334 | 3.6 | 2 |
| Isaiah Davis | 30 | 174 | 5.8 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Garrett Wilson | 101 | 1,104 | 10.9 | 7 |
| Davante Adams | 67 | 854 | 12.7 | 7 |
| Breece Hall | 57 | 483 | 8.5 | 3 |
| Tyler Conklin | 51 | 449 | 8.8 | 4 |
| Allen Lazard | 37 | 530 | 14.3 | 6 |

**KICKING:** Greg Zuerlein, 9-15 FGs, 13-14 PATs, 40 points
Anders Carlson, 8-10 FGs, 9-11 PATs, 33 points
**TACKLES:** Jamien Sherwood, 158; Quincy Williams, 116
**SACKS:** Will McDonald IV, 10.5; Quinnen Williams, 6.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Ashtyn Davis, 2; Brandin Echols, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

GREGORY FISHER-IMAGN IMAGES

**BACK TOGETHER** Quarterback Justin Fields and wide receiver **Garrett Wilson** have reunited after starring together at Ohio State in 2019-20. The Buckeyes went 20-2 over that stretch, as Fields turned himself into the 11th overall draft pick in 2021. Then, in 2022 — a year after the Chicago Bears selected Fields — the Jets took Wilson at No. 10. Wilson, who didn't get along very well with Aaron Rodgers, is thrilled to be playing with Fields again.

**LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON** Hall of Fame pass-rusher Jason Taylor is best known as a Miami Dolphins legend. But he did spend one year (2010) with the Jets, as they reached the AFC Championship Game. That's their most recent playoff season. In the second round of this year's draft, the Jets picked Jason's son, Mason, an LSU tight end. At Mason's draft party, Jason perhaps stung Dolphins fans by joining everyone in a "J-E-T-S, Jets, Jets, Jets!" chant.

**GARDNER THE GOLFER** During the summer of 2024, cornerback Sauce Gardner — already quite good at his main sport — decided to take up golf. At first, it was a humbling experience. (Other amateur golfers can relate.) Then he started improving. He posted videos updating his swing's progress on Instagram, interspersed with Tiger Woods clips. Gardner was hooked. "I fell in love with it, like, 'OK, I can actually do this,'" he said.

**A PARCELLS REPEAT**? Aaron Glenn knows how a successful rebuild works — for a couple of reasons. Yes, he just experienced it as the Detroit Lions' defensive coordinator. But as an NFL cornerback, he was with the Jets when they turned things around in the late 1990s. Glenn began his career with the Jets from 1994-2001. After they won just four games from 1995-96 under Rich Kotite, Bill Parcells took over and won nine, 12 and eight games in the next three seasons, reaching the AFC title game in the 1998 season — just two years removed from 1-15.

# SCOUTING THE JETS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK

"Aaron Glenn is going to follow that Dan Campbell blueprint and instill some toughness into a team that has been getting pushed around for too long. Glenn has a lot of authority. Make no mistake — he's the boss, not the GM. … The decision to build the offensive line right away by drafting Armand Membou is reminiscent of the team-building approach they used in Detroit. Right tackle has become a much more important position because the left defensive ends are just as good as the right defensive ends. … Garrett Wilson, pound for pound, is as good as any wide receiver. He's got great hands, routes and body control. … I think they're gonna plug Mason Taylor, Jason Taylor's son, into the lineup right away at tight end, and that's going to be a great decision. … Breece Hall has got serious wiggle in the open field. He's got every trait you could want for a running back. … I still think Olu Fashanu has got more upside for the new coaching staff to bring out of him. … They don't get any faster off the edge than Will McDonald IV. He's got the motor and the speed. … Don't see a lot of offensive lines that can block Quinnen Williams without double-teaming him. … Woody Johnson is going to have to write some big checks for Wilson, Jermaine Johnson and Sauce Gardner. They deserve it, especially Sauce. He's going to beat the Derek Stingley Jr. deal. … Andre Cisco is a pure center fielder. … I think Quincy Williams is highly underrated. … Bringing back Thomas Morstead was a smart move. There aren't a lot more consistent punters than him."

# 2025 JETS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 Fields, Justin | QB | 6-3 | 228 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-Pit-25 | D1-Chi-21 |
| 15 Martinez, Adrian | QB | 6-2 | 220 | 1 | Kansas State | FA-24 | FA-Det-23 |
| 2 Taylor, Tyrod | QB | 6-1 | 217 | 13 | Virginia Tech | FA-NYG-24 | D6-Bal-11 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Allen, Braelon | RB | 6-1 | 235 | 1 | Wisconsin | D4-24 | D4-NYJ-24 |
| 47 Beck, Andrew | FB | 6-3 | 255 | 6 | Texas | FA-25 | FA-NE-19 |
| 32 Davis, Isaiah | RB | 6-1 | 220 | 1 | South Dakota St. | D5b-24 | D5b-NYJ-24 |
| 21 Evans, Zach | RB | 5-11 | 202 | 1 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | D6-LAR-23 |
| 20 Hall, Breece | RB | 5-11 | 217 | 3 | Iowa State | D2-22 | D2-NYJ-22 |
| 34 Nwangwu, Kene | RB | 6-0 | 205 | 2 | Iowa State | FA-24 | D4-Min-21 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 Charles, Irvin | WR | 6-4 | 219 | 2 | Indiana (PA) | FA-22 | FA-NYJ-22 |
| 14 Corley, Malachi | WR | 5-11 | 215 | 1 | WKU | D3-24 | D3-NYJ-24 |
| 82 Gipson, Xavier | WR | 5-9 | 189 | 2 | Stephen F. Austin | FA-23 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| 86 Johnson, Neal | TE | 6-3 | 250 | 1 | Louisiana | FA-25 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 16 Johnson, Tyler | WR | 6-1 | 207 | 4 | Minnesota | FA-LAR-25 | D5-TB-20 |
| 81 Kuntz, Zack | TE | 6-8 | 251 | 1 | Old Dominion | D7-23 | D7-NYJ-23 |
| 10 Lazard, Allen | WR | 6-5 | 227 | 6 | Iowa State | FA-GB-23 | FA-Jac-18 |
| 83 Reynolds, Josh | WR | 6-3 | 194 | 8 | Texas A&M | FA-Jac-25 | D4a-LAR-17 |
| 89 Ruckert, Jeremy | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 3 | Ohio State | D3-22 | D3-NYJ-22 |
| 84 Smartt, Stone | TE | 6-4 | 226 | 3 | Old Dominion | FA-LAC-25 | FA-LAC-22 |
| 87 Smith, Brandon | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 1 | Iowa | FA-24 | FA-Dal-21 |
| 5 Wilson, Garrett | WR | 6-0 | 183 | 3 | Ohio State | D1b-22 | D1b-NYJ-22 |
| 81 Wilson, Ontaria | WR | 6-0 | 171 | 1 | Florida State | FA-25 | FA-LAC-23 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69 Bailey, Zack | OL | 6-5 | 300 | 1 | South Carolina | FA-24 | FA-TB-19 |
| 68 Eze, Obinna | OL | 6-8 | 325 | 1 | TCU | FA-23 | FA-Det-22 |
| 74 Fashanu, Olu | OL | 6-6 | 312 | 1 | Penn State | D1-24 | D1-NYJ-24 |
| 64 Levao, Kohl | OL | 6-6 | 350 | 1 | Hawai'i | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 61 Mitchell, Max | OL | 6-6 | 307 | 3 | Louisiana | D4a-22 | D4a-NYJ-22 |
| 71 Myers, Josh | C/G | 6-5 | 310 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-GB-25 | D2-GB-21 |
| 65 Newman, Xavier | OL | 6-2 | 297 | 2 | Baylor | FA-23 | FA-Ten-22 |
| 79 Okorafor, Chukwuma | OL | 6-6 | 320 | 6 | Western Michigan | FA-25 | D3b-Pit-18 |
| 76 Simpson, John | OL | 6-4 | 330 | 4 | Clemson | FA-Bal-24 | D4-LV-20 |
| 66 Tippmann, Joe | OL | 6-6 | 313 | 2 | Wisconsin | D2-23 | D2-NYJ-23 |
| 75 Vera-Tucker, Alijah | G | 6-5 | 308 | 4 | USC | D1b-21 | D1b-NYJ-21 |
| 67 Warren, Carter | T | 6-5 | 311 | 2 | Pitt | D4-23 | D4-NYJ-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72 Clemons, Micheal | DL | 6-5 | 263 | 3 | Texas A&M | D4b-22 | D4b-NYJ-22 |
| 93 Cowart, Byron | DL | 6-3 | 300 | 5 | Maryland | FA-Chi-25 | D5-NE-19 |
| 11 Johnson, Jermaine | DE | 6-5 | 254 | 3 | Florida State | D1c-22 | D1c-NYJ-22 |
| 99 McDonald IV, Will | DE | 6-4 | 236 | 2 | Iowa State | D1-23 | D1-NYJ-23 |
| 55 McGregor, Braiden | DL | 6-6 | 267 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 91 Nnadi, Derrick | DT | 6-1 | 317 | 7 | Florida State | FA-KC-25 | D3a-KC-18 |
| 96 Taylor III, Leonard | DL | 6-3 | 305 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 97 Tufele, Jay | DL | 6-3 | 309 | 4 | USC | FA-Cin-25 | D4b-Jac-21 |
| 58 Watts, Eric | DL | 6-5 | 277 | 1 | UConn | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 92 Weaver, Rashad | DL | 6-4 | 260 | 3 | Pitt | FA-25 | D4-Ten-21 |
| 95 Williams, Quinnen | DL | 6-3 | 303 | 6 | Alabama | D1-19 | D1-NYJ-19 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53 Barnes, Zaire | LB | 6-1 | 227 | 2 | Western Michigan | D6a-23 | D6a-NYJ-23 |
| 52 Davis, Jamin | LB | 6-4 | 234 | 4 | Kentucky | W-Min-24 | D1-Was-21 |
| 41 McCrary-Ball, M. | LB | 6-0 | 214 | 1 | Indiana | FA-23 | FA-SF-22 |
| 44 Sherwood, Jamien | LB | 6-2 | 216 | 4 | Auburn | D5a-21 | D5a-NYJ-21 |
| 49 Sirmon, Jackson | LB | 6-2 | 240 | 1 | California | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 56 Williams, Quincy | LB | 5-11 | 230 | 6 | Murray State | W-Jac-21 | D3-Jac-19 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 Adams, Tony | S | 5-11 | 203 | 3 | Illinois | FA-22 | FA-NYJ-22 |
| 29 Bernard-Converse, J. | CB | 6-1 | 205 | 2 | LSU | D6b-23 | D6b-NYJ-23 |
| 17 Boyd, Kris | CB | 5-11 | 201 | 6 | Texas | FA-Hou-25 | D7-Min-19 |
| 30 Carter II, Michael | CB | 5-10 | 184 | 4 | Duke | D5b-21 | D5b-NYJ-21 |
| 8 Cisco, Andre | S | 6-0 | 210 | 4 | Syracuse | FA-Jac-25 | D3-Jac-21 |
| 1 Gardner, Sauce | CB | 6-3 | 190 | 3 | Cincinnati | D1a-22 | D1a-NYJ-22 |
| 39 Monroe, Jarius | S | 6-2 | 205 | 1 | Tulane | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 26 Oliver, Isaiah | CB | 6-0 | 202 | 7 | Colorado | FA-24 | D2-Atl-18 |
| 25 Simpson, Jaylin | S | 5-11 | 179 | 1 | Auburn | FA-24 | D5-Ind-24 |
| 21 Stephens, Brandon | CB | 6-1 | 215 | 4 | SMU | FA-Bal-25 | D3b-Bal-21 |
| 37 Stiggers, Qwan'tez | CB | 6-0 | 197 | 1 | None | D5c-24 | D5c-NYJ-24 |
| 31 Swilling, Tre | CB | 6-1 | 193 | 1 | Georgia Tech | FA-24 | FA-Ten-22 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 Carlson, Anders | K | 6-5 | 215 | 1 | Auburn | FA-24 | D6-GB-23 |
| 42 Hennessy, Thomas | LS | 6-2 | 246 | 8 | Duke | T-Ind-17 | FA-Ind-17 |
| 43 McNamara, Austin | P | 6-4 | 210 | 1 | Texas Tech | FA-25 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 9 Zuerlein, Greg | K | 6-0 | 195 | 13 | Missouri Western | FA-22 | D6-LAR-12 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 5 | Garrett Wilson | 83 | Josh Reynolds |
| WR | 10 | Allen Lazard | 82 | Arian Smith (R) |
| WR | 16 | Tyler Johnson | 14 | Malachi Corley |
| LT | 74 | Olu Fashanu | 61 | Max Mitchell |
| LG | 76 | John Simpson | 64 | Kohl Levao |
| C | 66 | Joe Tippmann | 71 | Josh Myers |
| RG | 75 | Alijah Vera-Tucker | 65 | Xavier Newman |
| RT | 70 | Armand Membou (R) | 79 | Chukwuma Okorafor |
| TE | 48 | Mason Taylor (R) | 89 | Jeremy Ruckert |
| QB | 7 | Justin Fields | 2 | Tyrod Taylor |
| RB | 20 | Breece Hall | 0 | Braelon Allen |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 99 | Will McDonald IV | 58 | Eric Watts |
| DT | 91 | Derrick Nnadi | 93 | Byron Cowart |
| DT | 95 | Quinnen Williams | 96 | Leonard Taylor III |
| DE | 11 | Jermaine Johnson | 72 | Micheal Clemons |
| OLB | 53 | Zaire Barnes | 52 | Jamin Davis |
| ILB | 44 | Jamien Sherwood | 41 | Marcelino McCrary-Ball |
| OLB | 56 | Quincy Williams | 94 | Tyler Baron (R) |
| CB | 1 | Sauce Gardner | 26 | Isaiah Oliver |
| CB | 21 | Brandon Stephens | 23 | Azareye'h Thomas (R) |
| SS | 22 | Tony Adams | 39 | Jarius Monroe |
| FS | 8 | Andre Cisco | 27 | Malachi Moore (R) |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 9 | Greg Zuerlein | KR | 82 | Xavier Gipson |
| P | 43 | Austin McNamara | PR | 82 | Xavier Gipson |

**363**

Despite only five of their 12 losses coming by multiple scores, the Jets were last in the NFL in rushing attempts at 363.

# JETS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Armand Membou | OT | 6-4 | 332 | Missouri |
| 2 | Mason Taylor | TE | 6-5 | 251 | LSU |
| 3 | Azareye'h Thomas | CB | 6-1 | 197 | Florida State |
| 4 | Arian Smith | WR | 6-0 | 179 | Georgia |
| 4 | Malachi Moore | S | 5-11 | 196 | Alabama |
| 5 | Francisco Mauigoa | LB | 6-2 | 233 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 5 | Tyler Baron | Edge | 6-5 | 308 | Miami (Fla.) |

Armand Membou, selected at No. 7, will be an immediate starter at right tackle and should form a nice bookend with Olu Fashanu, last year's 11th overall pick. These new-look Jets want to run and be physical. Bolstering the offensive line helps. Mason Taylor has a legit shot to be the No. 1 tight end, since Jeremy Ruckert hasn't excelled through three seasons after the Jets drafted him in Round 3. Azareye'h Thomas and Malachi Moore should at least contribute to sub-packages for defensive-minded head coach Aaron Glenn's secondary. Arian Smith might be an intriguing speed addition for an offense that needs another big-time playmaker. But he must cut down on his drops.

BAL

# RAVENS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

1

Lamar Jackson's transcendent seven-year career has produced two Most Valuable Player awards but only three playoff wins, and the road to the still-elusive Super Bowl again has obstacles named Patrick Mahomes, Josh Allen and Joe Burrow. The Ravens have a roster built to take the next step, with relatively little turnover after a 12-5 season and second straight AFC North title. The offense returns nearly every starter, and the defense, led by Roquan Smith, Marlon Humphrey and rising star Kyle Hamilton, will benefit from being in coordinator Zach Orr's system for a second year. Yet each season, the burden grows for Jackson and this team to change the narrative of playoff shortcomings. Can this be the year they finally do it?

## OFFENSE

Coordinator Todd Monken's attack again will revolve around Jackson, whose ability to improvise has always been one of his biggest strengths. Derrick Henry still looks as if he were built in a lab, running over linebackers and outrunning defensive backs nearly 10 years younger. The threat of Jackson keeping the ball on read-option plays helped Henry, at age 30, average a career-best 5.9 yards per carry in his first season in Baltimore.

Henry and Jackson lead a rushing attack that again includes underrated Justice Hill as a third-down back. Road-grading fullback Patrick Ricard is back to pave the way. The Ravens hope that Keaton Mitchell, who flashed as a speedy undrafted rookie in 2023 before missing most of last season with a torn ACL, can return to form. He's also a candidate to return kicks.

The Ravens' signing of a 30-something receiver seems to be an annual tradition, and this year's new toy is DeAndre Hopkins. He joins a group headlined by Zay Flowers and Rashod Bateman. Flowers is a 5-foot-9 jitterbug who can be vexing to defenders given how he jukes his way for extra yardage. Bateman, maligned early in his career for his inability to stay healthy, is the team's top deep threat. He caught nine touchdowns last year after totaling only four in his first three seasons.

The Ravens have one of the league's best tight end duos in Mark Andrews and Isaiah Likely, and the fact that each is entering a contract year brings a sense of urgency. Andrews has been Jackson's favorite target since the two arrived as rookies together in 2018. He's also highly motivated to move past a disastrous AFC Divisional Round loss at Buffalo in which he lost a fumble and then dropped a potential game-tying two-point conversion. Likely does a lot of damage after the catch with a ferocious stiff-arm that would make Henry proud.

Up front, the Ravens re-signed All-Pro left tackle Ronnie Stanley as their most significant move of the offseason. He and Pro Bowl center Tyler Linderbaum anchor a line that returns four starters, including right guard Daniel Faalele and second-year right tackle Roger Rosengarten. The left guard spot is the only vacancy among offensive starters. The Ravens didn't draft any plug-and-play option, so Andrew Vorhees, a starter early last season, probably opens camp as the favorite.

## DEFENSE

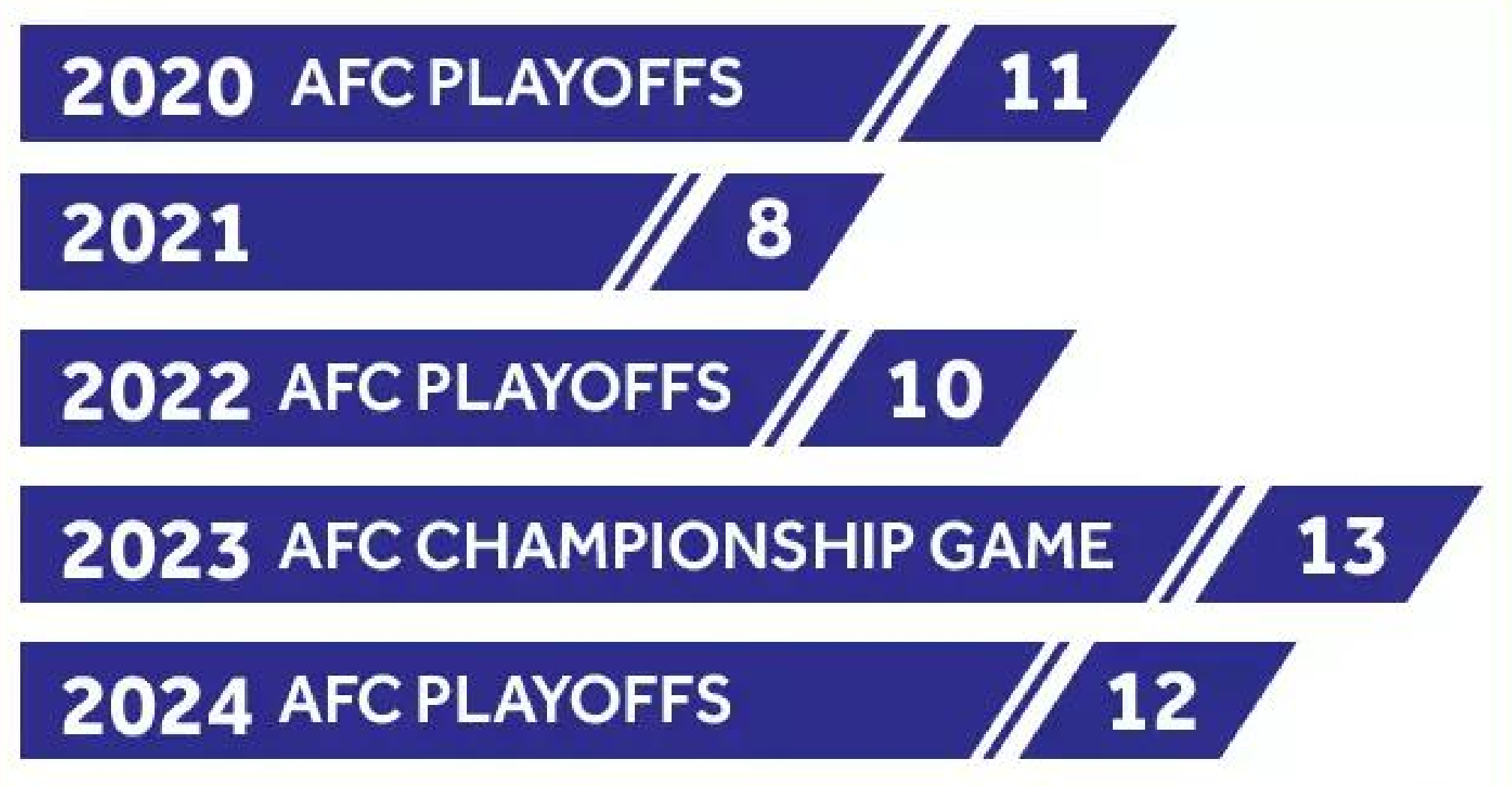
Orr's defense experienced growing pains in his first season as coordinator, but the unit steadily improved and includes Pro Bowl talent at all three levels. The Ravens leaned defense in the draft with three of their first four picks.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Buffalo | 8:20 |
| Sept. 14 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Sept. 22 | Detroit | 8:15 |
| Sept. 28 | at Kansas City | 4:25 |
| Oct. 5 | Houston | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | L.A. Rams | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | BYE | |
| Oct. 26 | Chicago | 1:00 |
| Oct. 30 | at Miami | 8:15 |
| Nov. 9 | at Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | at Cleveland | 4:25 |
| Nov. 23 | N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Nov. 27 | Cincinnati | 8:20 |
| Dec. 7 | Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | New England | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Green Bay | |
| TBD | at Pittsburgh | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** John Harbaugh
**Record With Team:** 172-104
**Career Record:** 172-104
**Offensive Coordinator:** Todd Monken
**Defensive Coordinator:** Zach Orr
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Chris Horton
**Quarterbacks:** Tee Martin
**Running Backs:** Willie Taggart
**Tight Ends:** George Godsey
**Wide Receivers:** Greg Lewis
**Offensive Line:** George Warhop
**Defensive Line:** Dennis Johnson
**Inside Linebackers:** Tyler Santucci
**Outside Linebackers:** Matt Robinson
**Senior Defensive Assistant/Secondary:** Chuck Pagano
**Defensive Backs:** Donald D'Alesio

**LAMAR JACKSON**
QUARTERBACK

TINA MACINTYRE-YEE/DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Up front, bull-rushing Nnamdi Madubuike can blow up the pocket from the inside and commands double-teams after a 13-sack season in 2023. Travis Jones is an emerging force, but the team needs a run-stuffer after Michael Pierce's retirement.

Smith returns in the middle of the 3-4 defense, but the Ravens are searching for a complement alongside the All-Pro. Trenton Simpson underwhelmed in his first attempt to seize the job last season, but the 2023 third-round pick will get another chance.

As with the tight ends, there's a sense of urgency with the edge rush group. Both 34-year-old Kyle Van Noy and Odafe Oweh, who tallied a team-best 12.5 and 10 sacks, respectively, in 2024, are set to become free agents after the season. Depth behind them has been a major question. Enter second-round draft pick Mike Green from Marshall. After leading the nation with 17 sacks, he should work into the rotation immediately.

In a strong Ravens secondary, Hamilton and Humphrey lead the way, and the team bolstered the unit by drafting Georgia safety Malaki Starks with the 27th overall pick.

Hamilton, a two-time All-Pro in his first three seasons, has emerged as one of the most versatile defenders in the league. He settles the defense from the back as a free safety, but his length (6-4) and physicality also play well near the line of scrimmage. He is a superb fundamental tackler with the ability to shed blocks and blow up bubble screens or blitz off the edge.

Starks can play all over as well, and the versatility of Hamilton and Starks will allow the Ravens to disguise looks right up until the snap. The unit suffered a blow, though, when safety Ar'Darius Washington suffered a torn Achilles during conditioning in May. The Ravens were expected to use him extensively in three-safety looks, and they'll need to add a veteran to a group that lacks depth.

Cornerback Nate Wiggins, the team's top draft pick in 2024, will command one spot on the outside with speed and instincts to stay with the best receivers. If Humphrey plays in the slot, which is often the Ravens' preference, the Ravens need a new starter on the outside, with Brandon Stephens gone in free agency. Veteran Chidobe Awuzie has been signed and could be that guy. Jalyn Armour-Davis and T.J. Tampa should also get a chance to win the job but need to show they can stay healthy, something they've failed to do.

## SPECIALISTS

The Ravens in May released All-Pro kicker Justin Tucker amid a league investigation into allegations that Tucker had engaged in sexual misconduct with more than a dozen Baltimore-area massage therapists. It's a stunning fall for the most accurate field-goal kicker in NFL history. It appears the Ravens will entrust their kicking game to rookie Tyler Loop, who became the first placekicker ever drafted by the team. Look for the Ravens to add a veteran to compete with Loop in training camp.

Jordan Stout is back as the team's punter, but the return game was pedestrian last year, and head coach John Harbaugh, who cut his teeth as a special-teams coach, has made it clear that he expects more out of his returners. Sixth-round pick LaJohntay Wester might get the first shot to win the punt return job.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Jackson has nothing left to prove in the regular season, with a record of 70-24 as a starter and two MVP awards. With the electrifying quarterback leading an offense that returns nearly every starter and a defense stocked with Pro Bowl players at all three levels, the Ravens again are positioned as a legitimate Super Bowl contender.

Yet for all the team's regular-season success, flawed execution in the postseason has been a recurring problem. That fact will burden the Ravens until they can overcome it.

## 2024 RESULTS (12-5)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 5 | at Kansas City | L | 20-27 |
| Sept. | 15 | Las Vegas | L | 23-26 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Dallas | W | 28-25 |
| Sept. | 29 | Buffalo | W | 35-10 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Cincinnati (ot) | W | 41-38 |
| Oct. | 13 | Washington | W | 30-23 |
| Oct. | 21 | at Tampa Bay | W | 41-31 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Cleveland | L | 24-29 |
| Nov. | 3 | Denver | W | 41-10 |
| Nov. | 7 | Cincinnati | W | 35-34 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Pittsburgh | L | 16-18 |
| Nov. | 25 | at L.A. Chargers | W | 30-23 |
| Dec. | 1 | Philadelphia | L | 19-24 |
| Dec. | 15 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 35-14 |
| Dec. | 21 | Pittsburgh | W | 34-17 |
| Dec. | 25 | at Houston | W | 31-2 |
| Jan. | 4 | Cleveland | W | 35-10 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 11 | Pittsburgh | W | 28-14 |
| Jan. | 19 | at Buffalo | L | 25-27 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 424.9 | 1 | 1 |
| Rushing | 187.6 | 1 | 1 |
| Passing | 237.4 | 7 | 2 |
| Scoring | 30.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Third Down % | 48.2 | 3 | 2 |
| Points/Play | 0.482 | 3 | 2 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 324.2 | 10 | 7 |
| Rushing | 80.1 | 1 | 1 |
| Passing | 244.1 | 31 | 15 |
| Scoring | 21.2 | 9 | 5 |
| Interceptions | 12 | T17 | 9 |
| Sacks | 54 | 2 | 2 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.345 | 8 | 5 |
| TO Differential | +6 | T10 | T5 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lamar Jackson | 474 | 316 | 4,172 | 41 | 4 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Derrick Henry | 325 | 1,921 | 5.9 | 16 |
| Lamar Jackson | 139 | 915 | 6.6 | 4 |
| Justice Hill | 47 | 228 | 4.9 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Zay Flowers | 74 | 1,059 | 14.3 | 4 |
| Mark Andrews | 55 | 673 | 12.2 | 11 |
| Rashod Bateman | 45 | 756 | 16.8 | 9 |
| Isaiah Likely | 42 | 477 | 11.4 | 6 |
| Justice Hill | 42 | 383 | 9.1 | 3 |
| Derrick Henry | 19 | 193 | 10.2 | 2 |

**KICKING:** Justin Tucker, 22-30 FGs, 60-62 PATs, 126 points

**TACKLES:** Roquan Smith, 154; Kyle Hamilton, 107

**SACKS:** Kyle Van Noy, 12.5; Odafe Oweh, 10.0

**INTERCEPTIONS:** Marlon Humphrey, 6; Ar'Darius Washington, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON** Running back Keaton Mitchell is the second second-generation Raven in franchise history. Mitchell's father, Anthony, was a reserve defensive back on the Ravens' 2000 Super Bowl team. The first second-generation Raven was current Cincinnati offensive tackle Orlando Brown Jr.

**FIELD OF DREAMS** After nearly every training camp practice open to fans, offensive coordinator Todd Monken pulls a random child out of the autograph line and brings him onto the field to play catch. He'll often recruit a player to join them. One minute, a 9-year-old is just hoping for an autograph, and the next he or she is running a pass pattern into the end zone against All-Pro safety Kyle Hamilton. "I just figure it's good karma," Monken says.

TOMMY GILLIGAN-IMAGN IMAGES

**HOOP IT UP** When he was a teenager, edge rusher **Odafe Oweh** had hoped to play in the NBA until the football coach at his high school, New Jersey's Blair Academy, convinced him to try out for the team. Oweh went on to Penn State and became a first-round draft pick. Oweh's brother, Otega, is still on Odafe's original path; Otega Oweh had a breakout basketball season at Kentucky and could be in the NBA soon.

**CHASING THE RING** Lamar Jackson is one of just 10 quarterbacks in NFL history with multiple MVP awards. Of the 10, he is the only one who has not won a Super Bowl.

**O CANADA** Linebacker Tavius Robinson grew up in Guelph, Ontario, and played two seasons at the University of Guelph. When Canadian collegiate sports were shut down by COVID-19, he began looking to American universities. Robinson landed at Ole Miss, where he played for three seasons before becoming a fourth-round draft pick in 2023. He's the only player from the University of Guelph ever drafted in the NFL.

# SCOUTING THE RAVENS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BALTIMORE

"Lamar Jackson owned the regular season with a ton of remarkable performances, but he was underwhelming in the playoffs. We've seen that story before. He keeps getting better as far as his overall game, no question. But he's gotta be better in the clutch to hit his potential. Still feels like there's a higher ceiling to reach with him. … Derrick Henry is like a runaway truck, a juggernaut, a wrecking ball, but he's got real breakaway speed, too. … Mark Andrews' huge drop in the playoff game was the exclamation point on a subpar season by him. He's too good to get rid of, though. … It feels like they're going to eventually elevate Isaiah Likely, who's very gifted. … If not for the Zay Flowers knee injury, I think Baltimore wins that playoff game. … The Ravens will wind up paying their center, Tyler Linderbaum. A lot of teams were thinking about the wrong things in the draft when he was coming out of Iowa. Arm length isn't as important for a center. … Ronnie Stanley might not be the most passionate guy about football, but he's still in a small group of left tackles that are at their upper echelon. … Kyle Van Noy found the right scheme and coaching staff to get the most out of him as a pass-rusher. … Roquan Smith is the closest Baltimore has come to having an elite middle linebacker since Ray Lewis retired. … Kyle Hamilton is the prototype safety when it comes to length, range, tackling and smarts. … They had a big hole at safety next to Hamilton. Have to think Malaki Starks is going to be an impact player. The Ravens know how to evaluate safeties."

## 2025 RAVENS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | Jackson, Lamar | QB | 6-2 | 205 | 7 | Louisville | D1b-18 | D1b-Bal-18 |
| 13 | Leary, Devin | QB | 6-1 | 216 | 1 | Kentucky | D6-24 | D6-Bal-24 |
| 15 | Rush, Cooper | QB | 6-3 | 224 | 7 | Central Michigan | FA-Dal-25 | FA-Dal-17 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Ali, Rasheen | RB | 5-11 | 212 | 1 | Marshall | D5-24 | D5-Bal-24 |
| 22 | Henry, Derrick | RB | 6-3 | 247 | 9 | Alabama | FA-Ten-24 | D2c-Ten-16 |
| 43 | Hill, Justice | RB | 5-10 | 195 | 6 | Oklahoma State | D4a-19 | D4a-Bal-19 |
| 34 | Mitchell, Keaton | RB | 5-8 | 191 | 2 | East Carolina | FA-23 | FA-Bal-23 |
| 42 | Ricard, Patrick | FB | 6-3 | 300 | 8 | Maine | FA-17 | FA-Bal-17 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 89 | Andrews, Mark | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 7 | Oklahoma | D3b-18 | D3b-Bal-18 |
| 7 | Bateman, Rashod | WR | 6-1 | 195 | 4 | Minnesota | D1a-21 | D1a-Bal-21 |
| 12 | Cunningham, Malik | WR | 6-1 | 186 | 2 | Louisville | FA-23 | FA-NE-23 |
| 4 | Flowers, Zay | WR | 5-9 | 175 | 2 | Boston College | D1-23 | D1-Bal-23 |
| 10 | Hopkins, DeAndre | WR | 6-1 | 212 | 12 | Clemson | FA-KC-25 | D1-Hou-13 |
| 87 | Kirkwood, Keith | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 5 | Temple | FA-24 | FA-NO-18 |
| 88 | Kolar, Charlie | TE | 6-6 | 267 | 3 | Iowa State | D4c-22 | D4c-Bal-22 |
| 80 | Likely, Isaiah | TE | 6-4 | 247 | 3 | Coastal Carolina | D4e-22 | D4e-Bal-22 |
| 6 | Miller, Anthony | WR | 5-11 | 199 | 5 | Memphis | FA-24 | D2-Chi-18 |
| 84 | Mitchell-Paden, Zaire | TE | 6-5 | 257 | 1 | Florida Atlantic | FA-24 | FA-Cle-22 |
| 82 | Wade, Dayton | WR | 5-9 | 184 | 1 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 81 | Walker, Devontez | WR | 6-1 | 198 | 1 | North Carolina | D4a-24 | D4a-Bal-24 |
| 16 | Wallace, Tylan | WR | 5-11 | 202 | 4 | Oklahoma State | D4-21 | D4-Bal-21 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 67 | Bullock, Corey | T | 6-3 | 314 | 1 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 66 | Cleveland, Ben | G | 6-6 | 360 | 4 | Georgia | D3a-21 | D3a-Bal-21 |
| 76 | Dalcourt, Darrian | G | 6-3 | 320 | 1 | Alabama | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 77 | Faalele, Daniel | G | 6-8 | 380 | 3 | Minnesota | D4a-22 | D4a-Bal-22 |
| 64 | Linderbaum, Tyler | C | 6-2 | 314 | 3 | Iowa | D1b-22 | D1b-Bal-22 |
| 68 | Noteboom, Joseph | T | 6-5 | 300 | 7 | TCU | FA-LAR-25 | D3-LAR-18 |
| 70 | Rosengarten, Roger | T | 6-5 | 316 | 1 | Washington | D2-24 | D2-Bal-24 |
| 61 | Samac, Nick | C | 6-4 | 314 | 1 | Michigan State | D7a-24 | D7a-Bal-24 |
| 79 | Stanley, Ronnie | T | 6-6 | 310 | 9 | Notre Dame | D1-16 | D1-Bal-16 |
| 72 | Vorhees, Andrew | G | 6-6 | 320 | 1 | USC | D7-23 | D7-Bal-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 98 | Jones, Travis | DL | 6-4 | 338 | 3 | UConn | D3-22 | D3-Bal-22 |
| 92 | Madubuike, Nnamdi | DL | 6-3 | 305 | 5 | Texas A&M | D3a-20 | D3a-Bal-20 |
| 94 | Odeleye, Adedayo | DL | 6-5 | 271 | 1 | Loughborough | FA-24 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 97 | Okoye, C.J. | DL | 6-6 | 315 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-LAC-23 |
| 68 | Ravenell, C.J. | DL | 6-5 | 292 | 1 | Missouri Western | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 96 | Washington, Broderick | DL | 6-2 | 315 | 5 | Texas Tech | D5-20 | D5-Bal-20 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 59 | Hamm, Malik | OLB | 6-3 | 254 | 2 | Lafayette | FA-23 | FA-Bal-23 |
| 35 | Hummel, Jacob | ILB | 6-1 | 229 | 3 | Iowa State | FA-LAR-25 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 50 | Isaac, Adisa | OLB | 6-4 | 253 | 1 | Penn State | D3-24 | D3-Bal-24 |
| 57 | Kwenkeu, William | LB | 6-1 | 235 | 3 | Temple | FA-24 | FA-Min-22 |
| 90 | Ojabo, David | OLB | 6-4 | 252 | 3 | Michigan | D2-22 | D2-Bal-22 |
| 99 | Oweh, Odafe | OLB | 6-5 | 255 | 4 | Penn State | D1b-21 | D1b-Bal-21 |
| 95 | Robinson, Tavius | OLB | 6-6 | 262 | 2 | Ole Miss | D4-23 | D4-Bal-23 |
| 23 | Simpson, Trenton | ILB | 6-2 | 235 | 2 | Clemson | D3-23 | D3-Bal-23 |
| 0 | Smith, Roquan | ILB | 6-1 | 230 | 7 | Georgia | T-Chi-22 | D1-Chi-18 |
| 53 | Van Noy, Kyle | OLB | 6-3 | 255 | 11 | BYU | FA-23 | D2-Det-14 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Armour-Davis, Jalyn | CB | 6-1 | 197 | 3 | Alabama | D4b-22 | D4b-Bal-22 |
| 25 | Awuzie, Chidobe | CB | 6-0 | 202 | 8 | Colorado | FA-Ten-25 | D2-Dal-17 |
| 24 | Brade, Beau | S | 6-0 | 209 | 1 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 14 | Hamilton, Kyle | S | 6-4 | 224 | 3 | Notre Dame | D1a-22 | D1a-Bal-22 |
| 44 | Humphrey, Marlon | CB | 6-0 | 203 | 8 | Alabama | D1-17 | D1-Bal-17 |
| 28 | Kane, Sanoussi | S | 5-11 | 210 | 1 | Purdue | D7b-24 | D7b-Bal-24 |
| 27 | Tampa Jr., T.J. | CB | 6-1 | 199 | 1 | Iowa State | D4b-24 | D4b-Bal-24 |
| 29 | Washington, Ar'Darius | S | 5-8 | 180 | 3 | TCU | FA-21 | FA-Bal-21 |
| 2 | Wiggins, Nate | CB | 6-1 | 182 | 1 | Clemson | D1-24 | D1-Bal-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 | Moore, Nick | LS | 6-2 | 260 | 3 | Georgia | FA-20 | FA-NO-19 |
| 11 | Stout, Jordan | P | 6-3 | 209 | 3 | Penn State | D4d-22 | D4d-Bal-22 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 4 | Zay Flowers | 16 | Tylan Wallace |
| WR | 7 | Rashod Bateman | 81 | Devontez Walker |
| WR | 10 | DeAndre Hopkins | 83 | LaJohntay Wester (R) |
| LT | 79 | Ronnie Stanley | 68 | Joseph Noteboom |
| LG | 72 | Andrew Vorhees | 74 | Garrett Dellinger (R) |
| C | 64 | Tyler Linderbaum | 61 | Nick Samac |
| RG | 77 | Daniel Faalele | 66 | Ben Cleveland |
| RT | 70 | Roger Rosengarten | 51 | Emery Jones Jr. (R) |
| TE | 89 | Mark Andrews | 80 | Isaiah Likely |
| QB | 8 | Lamar Jackson | 15 | Cooper Rush |
| RB | 22 | Derrick Henry | 43 | Justice Hill |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 92 | Nnamdi Madubuike | 68 | C.J. Ravenell |
| NT | 98 | Travis Jones | 97 | C.J. Okoye |
| DT | 96 | Broderick Washington | 93 | Aeneas Peebles (R) |
| OLB | 53 | Kyle Van Noy | 45 | Mike Green (R) |
| ILB | 23 | Trenton Simpson | 40 | Teddye Buchanan (R) |
| ILB | 0 | Roquan Smith | 35 | Jacob Hummel |
| OLB | 99 | Odafe Oweh | 95 | Tavius Robinson |
| CB | 2 | Nate Wiggins | 5 | Jalyn Armour-Davis |
| CB | 44 | Marlon Humphrey | 25 | Chidobe Awuzie |
| SS | 24 | Malaki Starks (R) | 21 | Sanoussi Kane |
| FS | 14 | Kyle Hamilton | 28 | Beau Brade |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 33 | Tyler Loop (R) | KR | 34 | Keaton Mitchell |
| p | 11 | Jordan Stout | PR | 83 | LaJohntay Wester (R) |

**562**

While Saquon Barkley led the league in rushing yards, Derrick Henry was the leader in Next Gen Stats' rushing yards over expected with 562 to Barkley's 549.

## RAVENS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Malaki Starks | S | 6-0 | 197 | Georgia |
| 2 | Mike Green | Edge | 6-3 | 251 | Marshall |
| 3 | Emery Jones Jr. | OT | 6-5 | 315 | LSU |
| 4 | Teddye Buchanan | LB | 6-2 | 233 | Cal |
| 5 | Carson Vinson | OT | 6-7 | 314 | Alabama A&M |
| 6 | Bilhal Kone | CB | 6-1 | 190 | Western Michigan |
| 6 | Tyler Loop | K | 5-11 | 191 | Arizona |
| 6 | LaJohntay Wester | WR | 5-9 | 163 | Colorado |
| 6 | Aeneas Peebles | DL | 6-0 | 282 | Virginia Tech |
| 6 | Robert Longerbeam | CB | 5-11 | 175 | Rutgers |
| 7 | Garrett Dellinger | G | 6-4 | 325 | LSU |

The Ravens attacked areas of need with three of their first four picks. Malaki Starks joins Kyle Hamilton to give the Ravens a versatile safety duo that can make game-changing plays. Starks looks to be a home-run pick. The selection of Mike Green, who was twice accused of sexual assault — he denied wrongdoing and was never charged — raised eyebrows given that the organization was already dealing with an active sexual misconduct investigation of since-released kicker Justin Tucker. The Tucker situation is a big reason the team selected Tyler Loop, the first kicker ever drafted by the Ravens. On offense, the Ravens focused in the trenches. Aeneas Peebles could contribute right away for a thin defensive line.

# BENGALS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Sept. 29 | at Denver | 8:15 |
| Oct. 5 | Detroit | 4:25 |
| Oct. 12 | at Green Bay | 4:25 |
| Oct. 16 | Pittsburgh | 8:15 |
| Oct. 26 | N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | Chicago | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | BYE | |
| Nov. 16 | at Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | New England | 1:00 |
| Nov. 27 | at Baltimore | 8:20 |
| Dec. 7 | at Buffalo | 4:25 |
| Dec. 14 | Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Miami | 8:20 |
| TBD | Arizona | |
| TBD | Cleveland | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| **2020** | 4 |
| **2021** SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP | 10 |
| **2022** AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 12 |
| **2023** | 9 |
| **2023** | 9 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Zac Taylor
**Record With Team:** 46-52-1
**Career Record:** 46-52-1
**Offensive Coordinator:** Dan Pitcher
**Defensive Coordinator:** Al Golden
**Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator:** Darrin Simmons
**Quarterbacks:** Brad Kragthorpe
**Running Backs:** Justin Hill
**Wide Receivers:** Troy Walters
**Tight Ends:** James Casey
**Offensive Line:** Scott Peters
**Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator:** Jerry Montgomery
**Linebackers:** Mike Hodges
**Secondary/Cornerbacks:** Charles Burks
**Secondary/Safeties:** Jordan Kovacs

AFC NORTH FORECAST

**2**

The Bengals are sick of being the non-playoff team other teams don't want to see near the end of the regular season.

Cincinnati's knack for slow starts and strong finishes is easier to digest when it results in a trip to postseason, where it's proved to be as tough of an out as any team in the league since Joe Burrow entered the NFL five years ago. The past two years, though, have left plenty to be desired and bemoaned, as Cincinnati — blessed with one of the NFL's best quarterbacks and an electric offense — has been sidelined for the playoffs despite playing Super Bowl-caliber offense during stretches of the 2023 and '24 seasons.

There's no dodging the expectations in 2025. Cincinnati can't fumble another season of Burrow's prime. It's playoffs (and more) or bust for the Bengals, who are once again poised to boast an elite offense while hanging on for dear life with just enough defense.

## OFFENSE

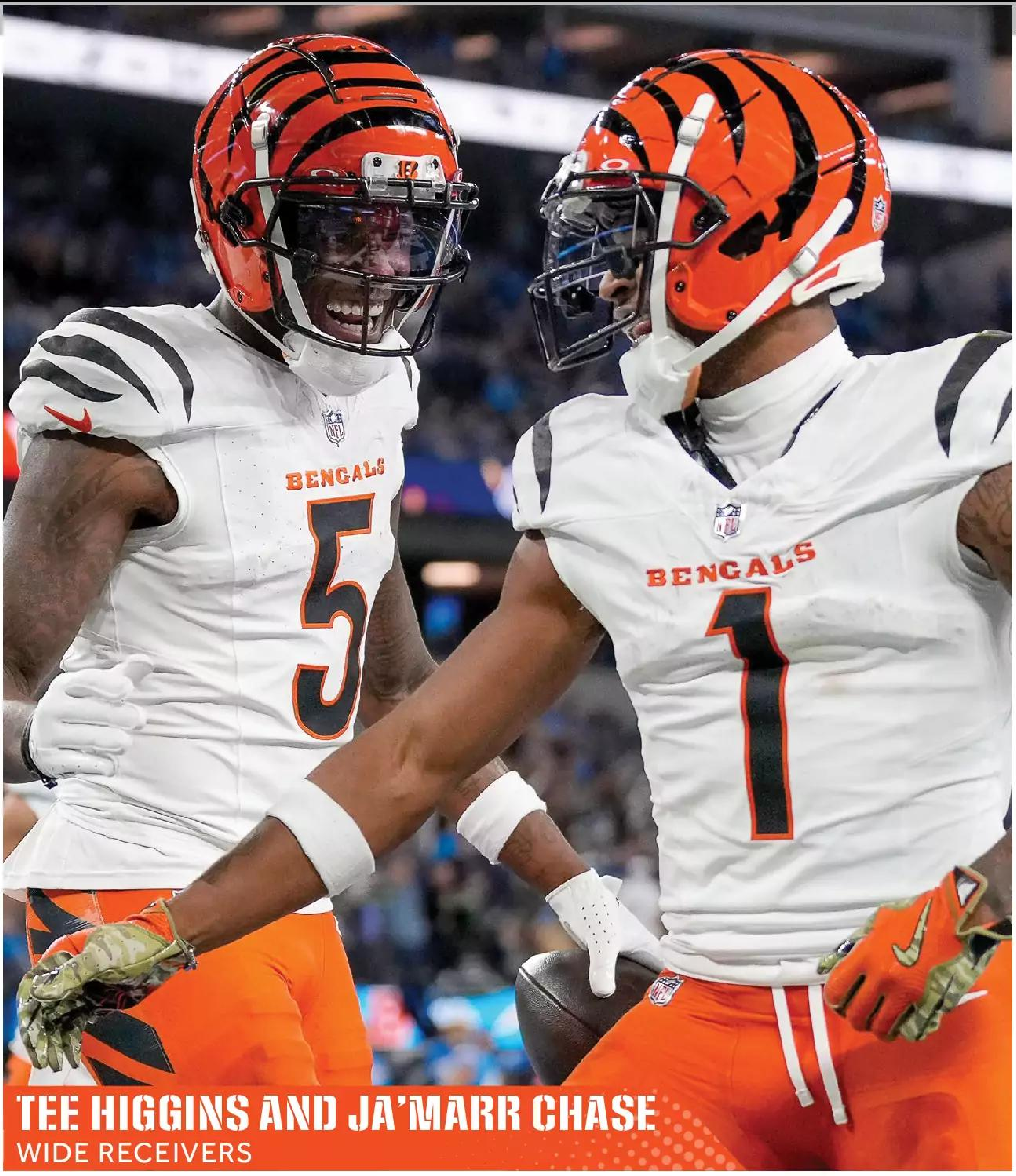
There are legitimate, sound reasons most teams don't devote significant financial resources to multiple wide receivers, but the Bengals are just fine being the exception. After all, a happy Burrow and Ja'Marr Chase can only help a passing attack that ranked atop the league in most categories in 2024 and is poised to be just as good — if not better — in 2025.

Burrow has most everyone around him back, as Chase and Tee Higgins both signed massive contract extensions to stay in Cincinnati. It was a huge win for the Bengals organization, which has a reputation — unfair or not — for pinching pennies and letting key players walk in free agency. The Bengals may be sacrificing important dollars in other areas, but the trio is universally convinced this was the best path forward. It's a small sample size, but the numbers show a difference, as Cincinnati went 3-7 in games Higgins missed over the past two seasons. Chase, who led the NFL in receptions, receiving yards and touchdowns in 2024, is good enough on his own to be a star no matter where he's playing or who else is on the field. He just becomes even more of a threat when Higgins, who would be a No. 1 WR on many other NFL teams, is available and providing a big target for Burrow in the red zone and on got-to-have-it third downs.

No quarterback was better than Burrow during the second half of 2024, and he's hoping to be even better in his sixth NFL season. From Week 5 to the end of the regular season, Burrow averaged a whopping 303.1 passing yards per game and compiled 36 touchdowns to just eight interceptions while leading the Bengals to an 8-5 record despite some disastrous defensive play.

It will be vital for the trio — make it a quartet when factoring in tight end Mike Gesicki, another big re-signing in the offseason — to stay healthy and go through an entire training camp together. It's something that hasn't happened the past few years due to injuries and contract holdouts, and the Bengals have paid for it, going 1-4 to start 2024, 1-3 in 2023 and 0-2 in 2022. The vaunted AFC North is too tough of a division to come back from a slow start.

The Bengals took a gamble when they traded mainstay running back Joe Mixon last year, but it paid off because Cincinnati may have a future star on its hands with Chase Brown. The third-year back is coming off a breakout 2024 in which he claimed the starting job by Week 4 and compiled a combined 1,350 rushing and receiving yards. Brown's ability to take short dump-offs for first downs only makes Cincinnati's lethal passing attack more dangerous.



TEE HIGGINS AND JA'MARR CHASE
WIDE RECEIVERS

SAM GREENE

## DEFENSE

Cincinnati made a difficult change at the top of its struggling defense, replacing longtime coordinator Lou Anarumo — considered to be one of the NFL's best — with Al Golden, who returns to the Bengals after guiding Notre Dame's defense to a national championship game appearance last season. Now, the Bengals need to change their performance in just about every aspect after a season in which they often hung Burrow and Co. out to dry despite having one of the NFL's best pass-rushers atop their depth chart. Cincinnati simply can't lose games in which the offense scores 30 or more points, something that occurred a whopping four times in 2024.

After another uncomfortable offseason with unfulfilled hopes of a contract extension, Trey Hendrickson is expected back and hoping to repeat as the NFL's sack king. The late bloomer has been one of the best free-agent signings in Bengals history and is looking to register a third straight season of 17.5 sacks. He just needs some help, as Cincinnati got only 18.5 sacks from the rest of its roster and largely struggled to contain opposing quarterbacks, who averaged 223.5 passing yards per game and always seemed to have an answer to Cincinnati's potent offense.

The Bengals, who lost defensive end Sam Hubbard to retirement, are banking on internal improvements from Joseph Ossai (five sacks in 2024) and Cam Sample (out all of 2024 with a torn Achilles) and a jump-start from first-round pick Shemar Stewart. The Texas A&M product boasts all of the traits teams want from an elite pass-rusher, but he struggled to accumulate sacks during his college career. The Bengals have confidence that Stewart can make an immediate impact, and they'll need it. On the interior, Cincinnati added T.J. Slaton Jr., who will replace Sheldon Rankins and look to help the Bengals bounce back from a so-so year against the run.

There's been minimal change at linebacker and the secondary as well. Germaine Pratt, who requested a trade, and Logan Wilson are back to anchor the linebacking corps and will be joined by second-rounder Demetrius Knight Jr., a star player on South Carolina's stout defense. Even if Pratt returns, the Bengals will find a spot for Knight to collect snaps.

The return of Dax Hill, who suffered a torn ACL early in the 2024 season, could help improve Cincinnati's performance in a young, largely homegrown defensive backfield. The 2022 first-round pick has enough versatility to play at outside cornerback or nickel — an area the Bengals will need to address after letting veteran Mike Hilton walk in free agency. Cam Taylor-Britt is a lock at one of the outside spots, and DJ Turner II is a likely regular in the rotation when/if Hill flips to the inside. Cincinnati will need more from free safety Geno Stone, a key acquisition last year who struggled in his first season with the Bengals, and additional growth from strong safety Jordan Battle, a 2023 third-round pick who took over for a struggling Vonn Bell last season.

## SPECIALISTS

Evan McPherson, the Bengals' fifth-year kicker, had to watch from the sidelines as the Bengals made a push for the playoffs last season, as he dealt with the first significant injury of his NFL career. The typically automatic kicker will be looking to bounce back after making just 16 of his 22 field-goal attempts in 2024. Punter Ryan Rehkow earned a two-year contract extension after his breakout rookie season. The big-footed Rehkow gives the Bengals a legitimate weapon in the punting game, an area they don't need too often when the offense is humming.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Cincinnati has the quarterback, weapons and track record to make a run back to the postseason and beyond. A strong start out of the gate and even a modest improvement on defense will give the Bengals a chance to prove it.

## 2024 RESULTS (9-8)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | New England | L | 10-16 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Kansas City | L | 25-26 |
| Sept. | 23 | Washington | L | 33-38 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Carolina | W | 34-24 |
| Oct. | 6 | Baltimore (ot) | L | 38-41 |
| Oct. | 13 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 17-7 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Cleveland | W | 21-14 |
| Oct. | 27 | Philadelphia | L | 17-37 |
| Nov. | 3 | Las Vegas | W | 41-24 |
| Nov. | 7 | at Baltimore | L | 34-35 |
| Nov. | 17 | at L.A. Chargers | L | 27-34 |
| Dec. | 1 | Pittsburgh | L | 38-44 |
| Dec. | 9 | at Dallas | W | 27-20 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Tennessee | W | 37-27 |
| Dec. | 22 | Cleveland | W | 24-6 |
| Dec. | 28 | Denver (ot) | W | 30-24 |
| Jan. | 4 | at Pittsburgh | W | 19-17 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 365.5 | 9 | 2 |
| Rushing | 92.6 | 30 | 14 |
| Passing | 272.9 | 1 | 1 |
| Scoring | 27.8 | 6 | 3 |
| Third Down % | 46.7 | 5 | 3 |
| Points/Play | 0.437 | 6 | 3 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 348.3 | 25 | 14 |
| Rushing | 124.8 | 19 | 11 |
| Passing | 223.5 | 21 | 11 |
| Scoring | 25.5 | T25 | T12 |
| Interceptions | 15 | T8 | T5 |
| Sacks | 36 | T25 | T11 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.399 | 25 | 13 |
| TO Differential | +3 | 14 | 8 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joe Burrow | 652 | 460 | 4,918 | 43 | 9 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chase Brown | 229 | 990 | 4.3 | 7 |
| Zack Moss | 74 | 242 | 3.3 | 2 |
| Joe Burrow | 42 | 201 | 4.8 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ja'Marr Chase | 127 | 1,708 | 13.4 | 17 |
| Tee Higgins | 73 | 911 | 12.5 | 10 |
| Mike Gesicki | 65 | 665 | 10.2 | 2 |
| Chase Brown | 54 | 360 | 6.7 | 4 |
| Andrei Iosivas | 36 | 479 | 13.3 | 6 |

**KICKING:** Evan McPherson, 16-22 FGs, 37-38 PATs, 85 points
Cade York, 9-11 FGs, 14-15 PATs, 41 points
**TACKLES:** Germaine Pratt, 143; Logan Wilson, 104
**SACKS:** Trey Hendrickson, 17.5; Joseph Ossai, 5.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Geno Stone, 4; Cam Taylor-Britt, 3

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**RENOVATIONS COMING** It hasn't always been the most harmonious of relationships, but the Bengals and Hamilton County came to a big agreement in April to spruce up Paycor Field. The team and its home county agreed to $185 million in renovations for the 2026 season. It's expected to be the first installment of what will amount to $830 million in improvements to the 25-year-old stadium. The Bengals' lease on the building expires in June 2026.

**SIMPLE MESSAGE** During his first-ever tour of the Bengals' facility, first-round draft pick **Shemar Stewart** ran into the most famous Joe in Cincinnati. Pro Bowl quarterback Joe Burrow made sure to introduce himself to Stewart and offered a simple message, which was captured by the Bengals' social media team. "Let's go get some sacks this year. Let's go," Burrow said. Stewart was able to laugh about the encounter when he met with reporters later in the day. "I met some guy named Joe in the locker room," Stewart said.

**BURDEN LIFTED** On the field, no one could tell that Ja'Marr Chase was affected by the uncertainty of his future with the Bengals, which was extended in a massive way in March following a contentious year-plus of back-and-forth negotiations. Chase's trainer, though, believes he will be working and playing with a clear mind — and that could be dangerous for the rest of the NFL. Mo Wells, director of Pro and Elite Sports, told Bengals.com that Chase hasn't changed a bit, but he is even more focused on being the best receiver in the NFL. "He's really the same from a personality standpoint," Wells said. "But now that pressure is off him getting that deal done. Now his shoulders can drop a little bit and just really focus on his training and playing ball."

# SCOUTING THE BENGALS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CINCINNATI

"Joe Burrow has the arm, the guts and the juice. He should take a commission on those deals for Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins. From what I was told, Burrow made it happen when he lobbied ownership to get those contracts done. … Burrow has as much arm talent as anyone in the league. … For my money, Chase is as good as any receiver, even Justin Jefferson. Higgins is a nice player, too. You can see why they invested in both receivers long-term. … Mike Gesicki was really solid last season. … Orlando Brown Jr. got in much better shape and applied himself. He's grown a lot as a player. … Amarius Mims is massive, yeah, but he moves very well for his size. … I don't think they can count on Jermaine Burton to stay out of trouble. He was a problem at Alabama. He's a problem in Cincinnati. He hasn't changed. … I like how they have tailored the offense to take advantage of all the things Chase Brown can do. … I think they ultimately will pay Trey Hendrickson. There aren't many pass-rushers with his repertoire of moves and stamina. He's a four-quarter kind of player. … Logan Wilson is top five for pass coverage at the linebacker position. … Joseph Ossai's speed is tough to stop. … DJ Turner II is fully healthy now. He's primed for a big year. … Geno Stone has it all except for height. … If the Bengals coaches get everything they can out of Shemar Stewart, this could be a special rookie year. ... The way the Bengals finished the season, if they start fast this time, they could make some noise in the AFC North and make the playoffs."

FRANK BOWEN IV/THE ENQUIRER

# 2025 BENGALS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 Browning, Jake | QB | 6-2 | 209 | 2 | Washington | FA-21 | FA-Min-19 |
| 9 Burrow, Joe | QB | 6-4 | 215 | 5 | LSU | D1-20 | D1-Cin-20 |
| 11 Woodside, Logan | QB | 6-1 | 210 | 5 | Toledo | FA-Atl-24 | D7-Cin-18 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 Brightwell, Gary | RB | 6-1 | 218 | 4 | Arizona | FA-24 | D6-NYG-21 |
| 30 Brown, Chase | RB | 5-10 | 210 | 2 | Illinois | D5-23 | D5-Cin-23 |
| 36 Milton, Kendall | RB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | Georgia | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |
| 31 Moss, Zack | RB | 5-10 | 220 | 5 | Utah | FA-Ind-24 | D3-Buf-20 |
| 34 Perine, Samaje | RB | 5-11 | 235 | 7 | Oklahoma | FA-KC-25 | D4-Was-17 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 83 All Jr., Erick | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 1 | Iowa | D4-24 | D4-Cin-24 |
| 17 Burgess, Cole | WR | 6-1 | 198 | 1 | SUNY Cortland | FA-24 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 81 Burton, Jermaine | WR | 6-0 | 204 | 1 | Alabama | D3a-24 | D3a-Cin-24 |
| 1 Chase, Ja'Marr | WR | 6-0 | 205 | 4 | LSU | D1-21 | D1-Cin-21 |
| 88 Gesicki, Mike | TE | 6-6 | 245 | 7 | Penn State | FA-NE-24 | D2-Mia-18 |
| 85 Grandy, Cam | TE | 6-5 | 253 | 1 | Illinois State | FA-24 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 5 Higgins, Tee | WR | 6-4 | 220 | 5 | Clemson | D2-20 | D2-Cin-20 |
| 87 Hudson, Tanner | TE | 6-5 | 241 | 5 | Southern Arkansas | FA-22 | FA-TB-18 |
| 80 Iosivas, Andrei | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 2 | Princeton | D6a-23 | D6a-Cin-23 |
| 15 Jones, Charlie | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 2 | Purdue | D4-23 | D4-Cin-23 |
| 84 McLachlan, Tanner | TE | 6-5 | 244 | 1 | Arizona | D6a-24 | D6a-Cin-24 |
| 19 Pryor, Kendric | WR | 5-11 | 189 | 2 | Wisconsin | FA-23 | FA-Cin-22 |
| 89 Sample, Drew | TE | 6-5 | 260 | 6 | Washington | D2-19 | D2-Cin-19 |
| 82 Tinsley, Mitchell | WR | 6-1 | 205 | 2 | Penn State | FA-25 | FA-Was-23 |
| 18 Williams, Isaiah | WR | 5-10 | 185 | 1 | Illinois | W-Det-24 | FA-Det-24 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75 Brown Jr., Orlando | T | 6-8 | 350 | 7 | Oklahoma | FA-KC-23 | D3a-Bal-18 |
| 76 Cochran, Devin | T | 6-7 | 330 | 2 | Georgia Tech | FA-22 | FA-Cin-22 |
| 79 Coker, Andrew | T | 6-7 | 315 | 1 | TCU | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 61 Ford, Cody | G/T | 6-3 | 345 | 6 | Oklahoma | FA-Ari-23 | D2-Buf-19 |
| 64 Karras, Ted | C | 6-4 | 310 | 9 | Illinois | FA-NE-22 | D6c-NE-16 |
| 60 Kirkland, Jaxson | G | 6-7 | 325 | 1 | Washington | FA-23 | FA-Cin-23 |
| 65 Lee, Matt | C | 6-4 | 310 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | D7b-24 | D7b-Cin-24 |
| 66 Manning, Tashawn | G | 6-4 | 340 | 1 | Kentucky | FA-24 | FA-Bal-23 |
| 71 Mims, Amarius | T | 6-8 | 350 | 1 | Georgia | D1-24 | D1-Cin-24 |
| 62 Patrick, Lucas | G | 6-3 | 313 | 8 | Duke | FA-NO-25 | FA-GB-16 |
| 73 Stueber, Andrew | T | 6-7 | 338 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | D7-NE-22 |
| 67 Volson, Cordell | G | 6-6 | 315 | 3 | North Dakota State | D4-22 | D4-Cin-22 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91 Hendrickson, Trey | DE | 6-4 | 265 | 8 | Florida Atlantic | FA-NO-21 | D3c-NO-17 |
| 92 Hill, B.J. | DT | 6-3 | 311 | 7 | NC State | T-NYG-21 | D3-NYG-18 |
| 93 Jackson, McKinnley | DT | 6-2 | 330 | 1 | Texas A&M | D3b-24 | D3b-Cin-24 |
| 90 Jenkins Jr., Kris | DT | 6-3 | 310 | 1 | Michigan | D2-24 | D2-Cin-24 |
| 56 Johnson III, Raymond | DE | 6-3 | 270 | 2 | Georgia Southern | FA-24 | FA-NYG-21 |
| 52 Johnson, Cedric | DE | 6-3 | 264 | 1 | Ole Miss | D6b-24 | D6b-Cin-24 |
| 99 Murphy, Myles | DE | 6-5 | 275 | 2 | Clemson | D1-23 | D1-Cin-23 |
| 58 Ossai, Joseph | DE | 6-4 | 263 | 4 | Texas | D3-21 | D3-Cin-21 |
| 96 Sample, Cam | DE | 6-3 | 272 | 4 | Tulane | D4a-21 | D4a-Cin-21 |
| 98 Slaton Jr., T.J. | DT | 6-4 | 330 | 4 | Florida | FA-GB-25 | D5a-GB-21 |
| 51 Thomas, Isaiah | DE | 6-5 | 272 | 2 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | D7-Cle-22 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 Burks, Oren | LB | 6-3 | 233 | 7 | Vanderbilt | FA-Phi-25 | D3-GB-18 |
| 53 Giles-Harris, Joe | LB | 6-2 | 234 | 5 | Duke | FA-Cin-25 | FA-Jac-19 |
| 50 Heyward, Shaka | LB | 6-3 | 238 | 1 | Duke | FA-23 | FA-Cin-23 |
| 45 Njongmeta, Maema | LB | 6-0 | 232 | 1 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 57 Pratt, Germaine | LB | 6-3 | 250 | 6 | NC State | D3-19 | D3-Cin-19 |
| 55 Wilson, Logan | LB | 6-2 | 245 | 5 | Wyoming | D3-20 | D3-Cin-20 |
| 47 Young, Craig | LB | 6-3 | 225 | 1 | Kansas | FA-24 | FA-Ind-24 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 Anderson, Tycen | S | 6-2 | 205 | 3 | Toledo | D5-22 | D5-Cin-22 |
| 33 Anthony, Daijahn | S | 6-0 | 200 | 1 | Ole Miss | D7a-24 | D7a-Cin-24 |
| 27 Battle, Jordan | S | 6-1 | 215 | 2 | Alabama | D3-23 | D3-Cin-23 |
| 41 Brooks, Nate | CB | 6-0 | 198 | 2 | North Texas | FA-24 | FA-Ari-19 |
| 35 Davis, Jalen | CB | 5-10 | 186 | 5 | Utah State | FA-20 | FA-Mia-18 |
| 23 Hill, Dax | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 3 | Michigan | D1-22 | D1-Cin-22 |
| 38 Ivey, DJ | CB | 6-1 | 192 | 2 | Miami (Fla.) | D7-23 | D7-Cin-23 |
| 37 Jules, PJ | S | 6-0 | 203 | 1 | Southern Illinois | FA-24 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 43 Key, Jaylen | S | 6-2 | 210 | 1 | Alabama | FA-24 | D7-NYJ-24 |
| 28 Newton, Josh | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | TCU | D5-24 | D5-Cin-24 |
| 39 Robinson, Lance | CB | 5-10 | 185 | 1 | Tulane | FA-24 | FA-Cin-24 |
| 22 Stone, Geno | S | 5-11 | 210 | 5 | Iowa | FA-Bal-24 | D7-Bal-20 |
| 29 Taylor-Britt, Cam | CB | 5-11 | 200 | 3 | Nebraska | D2-22 | D2-Cin-22 |
| 20 Turner II, DJ | CB | 5-11 | 185 | 2 | Michigan | D2-23 | D2-Cin-23 |
| 42 Wilson, Marco | CB | 5-11 | 191 | 4 | Florida | W-NE-24 | D4-Ari-21 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 Adomitis, Cal | LS | 6-2 | 238 | 3 | Pitt | FA-22 | FA-Cin-22 |
| 2 McPherson, Evan | K | 5-11 | 185 | 4 | Florida | D5-21 | D5-Cin-21 |
| 8 Rehkow, Ryan | P | 6-4 | 235 | 1 | BYU | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 1 | Ja'Marr Chase | 81 | Jermaine Burton |
| WR | 5 | Tee Higgins | 15 | Charlie Jones |
| WR | 16 | Andrei Iosivas | 18 | Isaiah Williams |
| LT | 75 | Orlando Brown Jr. | 74 | Jalen Rivers (R) |
| LG | 67 | Cordell Volson | 63 | Dylan Fairchild (R) |
| C | 64 | Ted Karras | 65 | Matt Lee |
| RG | 61 | Cody Ford | 62 | Lucas Patrick |
| RT | 71 | Amarius Mims | 76 | Devin Cochran |
| TE | 88 | Mike Gesicki | 89 | Drew Sample |
| QB | 9 | Joe Burrow | 6 | Jake Browning |
| RB | 30 | Chase Brown | 31 | Zack Moss |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 58 | Joseph Ossai | 96 | Cam Sample |
| DT | 98 | T.J. Slaton Jr. | 90 | Kris Jenkins Jr. |
| DT | 92 | B.J. Hill | 93 | McKinnley Jackson |
| DE | 91 | Trey Hendrickson | 97 | Shemar Stewart (R) |
| MLB | 55 | Logan Wilson | 44 | Demetrius Knight Jr. (R) |
| WLB | 57 | Germaine Pratt | 42 | Oren Burks |
| CB | 29 | Cam Taylor-Britt | 28 | Josh Newton |
| CB | 20 | DJ Turner II | 38 | DJ Ivey |
| NB | 23 | Dax Hill | 35 | Jalen Davis |
| SS | 27 | Jordan Battle | 33 | Daijahn Anthony |
| FS | 22 | Geno Stone | 26 | Tycen Anderson |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 2 | Evan McPherson | KR | 15 | Charlie Jones |
| P | 8 | Ryan Rehkow | PR | 15 | Charlie Jones |

**46**

Trey Hendrickson led the NFL with 46 "quick" pressures (under three seconds) per NFL Next Gen Stats, six ahead of second-place Myles Garrett.

# BENGALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Shemar Stewart | DE | 6-5 | 267 | Texas A&M |
| 2 | Demetrius Knight Jr. | LB | 6-2 | 245 | South Carolina |
| 3 | Dylan Fairchild | G | 6-5 | 318 | Georgia |
| 4 | Barrett Carter | LB | 6-1 | 231 | Clemson |
| 5 | Jalen Rivers | OT | 6-5 | 319 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 6 | Tahj Brooks | RB | 5-10 | 230 | Texas Tech |

The Bengals are banking on Shemar Stewart, their first-round selection, to reach a level of production that he didn't quite hit at Texas A&M, where he had just 4.5 sacks across three seasons. Stewart looks the part and possesses the necessary physical traits to be an elite pass-rusher, and the Bengals will be counting on him for an immediate impact. Demetrius Knight Jr., one of the best players on one of the nation's best defenses at South Carolina, brings valuable versatility and could find a niche in several different spots. Knight, a mature 25-year-old, has a chance to play right away if Germaine Pratt gets the trade he wants. Dylan Fairchild will be given a chance to earn a starting job, as the Bengals will be looking to replace departed veteran Alex Cappa.

# BROWNS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

**4**

In the wake of a 3-14 season in 2024 and a public acknowledgment that their big bet on quarterback Deshaun Watson has failed, the Browns face an uncertain future. They don't know who their starting quarterback will be in 2025 or '26, and past investments in Watson and in older players whose contracts were structured around Watson's have left the team in a difficult salary-cap position.

It's fair to wonder about the futures of general manager Andrew Berry and head coach Kevin Stefanski, just as it's fair to wonder what the team might really classify as success in the season ahead. If the Browns just return to respectability and develop some young players, maybe ownership will view the season favorably. But the Browns are holding an open quarterback competition and added an extra first-round pick in 2026, an indication that their signal-caller search might resume early next year.

All-Pro defensive end Myles Garrett publicly requested a trade in February and then went on a media tour in which he said he was ready for a fresh start and didn't believe the Browns were ready to win. In March, the Browns signed Garrett to an extension through 2030 that briefly made him the highest-paid non-quarterback in NFL history and apparently convinced him that things would be OK.

Garrett leads a defense that has some nice pieces. The Browns have an experienced but aging offensive line, and they have almost a completely blank slate at quarterback.

## OFFENSE

At quarterback, the Browns are going to camp with veterans Joe Flacco and Kenny Pickett and two draft picks, Dillon Gabriel and Shedeur Sanders. The Browns chose not to draft a quarterback in the first two rounds but took Gabriel and the third and decided to end Sanders' slide in the fifth. Some believe Sanders is talented enough to eventually become the starter, but his draft position says he's guaranteed nothing.

Either Flacco or Pickett will probably win the starting job this summer, but unless the Browns are playoff contenders, expect one of the rookies to be playing later in the season. Watson is signed through 2026, and the Browns currently have salary-cap commitments to him through 2028, but he's recovering from a second Achilles injury and isn't expected to play for Cleveland again.

In wide receiver Jerry Jeudy and tight end David Njoku, the Browns think they have foundational pieces in a group of skill players that's in transition. Jeudy was a nice, low-cost find ahead of 2024, and Njoku enters the final year of his current contract looking to recapture his 2023 form. Third-year wide receiver Cedric Tillman posted some big games last season before missing time with a concussion, but he will return to the starting lineup. The Browns did not add a wide receiver in the draft, which can be taken both as an endorsement of Tillman and an acknowledgment that the position is wide open after the two starters.

Second-round pick Quinshon Judkins figures to be the starting running back as the Browns return to running a wide-zone scheme with Stefanski going back to being the play-caller. Running back Jerome Ford is only signed through this season, and fourth-round selection Dylan Sampson will also compete for backfield touches. Though the addition of two rookies makes Ford's future uncertain, Ford has the speed to create big plays, and Judkins is viewed more as a powerful,

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at Detroit | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | Minnesota (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 12 | at Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Miami | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | BYE | |
| Nov. 9 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | Baltimore | 4:25 |
| Nov. 23 | at Las Vegas | 4:05 |
| Nov. 30 | San Francisco | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Chicago | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Cincinnati | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2023 AFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2021 | 8 |
| 2022 | 7 |
| 2023 AFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2024 | 3 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Kevin Stefanski
**Record With Team:** 40-44
**Career Record:** 40-44
**Offensive Coordinator:** Tommy Rees
**Defensive Coordinator:** Jim Schwartz
**Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator:** Bubba Ventrone
**Quarterbacks:** Bill Musgrave
**Running Backs:** Duce Staley
**Pass Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers:** Chad O'Shea
**Tight Ends:** Christian Jones
**Offensive Line:** Mike Bloomgren
**Defensive Line:** Jacques Cesaire
**Linebackers:** Jason Tarver
**Cornerbacks:** Brandon Lynch
**Safeties:** Ephraim Banda

**MYLES GARRETT**
DEFENSIVE END

JEFF LANGE/BEACON JOURNAL]

short-yardage runner. After the Browns posted only eight rushing touchdowns last season, expect to see an emphasis on running the ball well in 2025 with the hopes that a strong run game can open things up for the play-action pass game.

Right tackle Jack Conklin has been solid when healthy. But the Browns have questions at left tackle, with Dawand Jones making a full-time position switch and returning from offseason knee surgery. The interior core of guards Joel Bitonio and Wyatt Teller and center Ethan Pocic has been good, but all three are signed only through 2025. Bitonio, a perennial Pro Bowler, considered retirement before deciding to return for a 12th and potentially final season.

## DEFENSE

Garrett can take over games, and he always commands extra attention from opposing offenses. The Browns' thinking in starting their draft with tackle Mason Graham is that Garrett can continue to dominate on the outside and that Graham can consistently win against single blocks on the inside. Third-year coordinator Jim Schwartz wants an aggressive unit that forces opposing quarterbacks into mistakes, and the team believes that the defense is good enough to carry the offense for at least part of the season ahead.

Cornerback Denzel Ward remains one of the league's best as he enters his eighth NFL season. The Browns thought they had another star opposite Ward in Martin Emerson Jr., but Emerson struggled in 2024 after posting two strong seasons to start his career. Both Emerson and Greg Newsome II are signed only through 2025, so the future at the position is a little uncertain.

Linebacker Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah suffered a potentially significant neck injury last October and is out for the 2025 season. The Browns drafted linebacker Carson Schwesinger in the second round and signed Jerome Baker in free agency in preparation for playing without Owusu-Koramoah, who went to the Pro Bowl after the 2023 season.

The Browns have experience and leadership in safety Grant Delpit, linebacker Jordan Hicks, new defensive tackle Maliek Collins and defensive tackle Shelby Harris. Fourth-year edge rusher Alex Wright will return from injury and try to play his way into the team's longer-term plans, and edge Joe Tryon-Shoyinka was also signed to a one-year deal to help the pass rush.

## SPECIALISTS

Punter Corey Bojorquez has posted some solid seasons and gives the coaching staff a comfort level with the punting game. The Browns don't want Bojorquez to be nearly as busy as he was last season, but he's proven he can punt in less-than-ideal weather.

In 2023, the Browns acquired Dustin Hopkins just before the start of the season, and Hopkins went on to set a franchise records for field goals made (33) while going 8-for-8 from 50 yards and beyond. Hopkins signed a contract extension before 2024 and then had a difficult year, leaving the future of the Browns' kicking position uncertain. The contract, which goes through the 2027 season, says Hopkins will be given a chance to bounce back, but the Browns are a future-focused team and won't be afraid to move on if Hopkins struggles again.

The team won't know who wins its return specialist jobs until later this summer, but veteran DeAndre Carter was added in March and will be given a chance to make the team.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Browns probably aren't a playoff team, but the defense is talented enough to at least make things difficult on opponents. Now, can the offense find some help from the rookie class — and at least decent quarterback play? That's both a mystery and probably the key to the Browns having at least a competitive season. If a rookie quarterback emerges, the future looks at least somewhat bright. If the offense bottoms out again, the Browns will almost certainly be in fourth place in the AFC North and back in the top five of the draft.

## 2024 RESULTS (3-14)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Dallas | L | 17-33 |
| Sept, | 15 | at Jacksonville | W | 18-13 |
| Sept. | 22 | N.Y. Giants | L | 15-21 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Las Vegas | L | 16-20 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Washington | L | 13-34 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Philadelphia | L | 16-20 |
| Oct. | 20 | Cincinnati | L | 14-21 |
| Oct. | 27 | Baltimore | W | 29-24 |
| Nov. | 3 | L.A. Chargers | L | 10-27 |
| Nov. | 17 | at New Orleans | L | 14-35 |
| Nov. | 21 | Pittsburgh | W | 24-19 |
| Dec. | 2 | at Denver | L | 32-41 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Pittsburgh | L | 14-27 |
| Dec. | 15 | Kansas City | L | 7-21 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Cincinnati | L | 6-24 |
| Dec. | 29 | Miami | L | 3-20 |
| Jan. | 4 | at Baltimore | L | 10-35 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 300.8 | 28 | 15 |
| Rushing | 94.6 | 29 | 13 |
| Passing | 206.2 | 22 | 11 |
| Scoring | 15.2 | 32 | 16 |
| Third Down % | 29.5 | 32 | 16 |
| Points/Play | 0.231 | 32 | 16 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 342.1 | 19 | 12 |
| Rushing | 129.7 | 21 | 12 |
| Passing | 212.4 | 12 | 7 |
| Scoring | 25.6 | T28 | T14 |
| Interceptions | 4 | 32 | 16 |
| Sacks | 41 | T13 | 6 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.418 | 28 | 15 |
| TO Differential | -22 | 32 | 16 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jameis Winston | 296 | 181 | 2,121 | 13 | 12 |
| Deshaun Watson | 216 | 137 | 1,148 | 5 | 3 |
| D. Thompson-Robinson | 118 | 61 | 440 | 0 | 6 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jerome Ford | 104 | 565 | 5.4 | 3 |
| Nick Chubb | 102 | 332 | 3.3 | 3 |
| D'Onta Foreman | 71 | 232 | 3.3 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jerry Jeudy | 90 | 1,229 | 13.7 | 4 |
| David Njoku | 64 | 505 | 7.9 | 5 |
| Elijah Moore | 61 | 538 | 8.8 | 1 |
| Jordan Akins | 40 | 390 | 9.8 | 2 |

**KICKING:** Dustin Hopkins, 18-27 FGs, 17-20 PATs, 71 points
**TACKLES:** Grant Delpit, 111; Martin Emerson, 80
**SACKS:** Myles Garrett, 14.0; Za'Darius Smith, 5.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Denzel Ward, 2; 2 players tied with 1

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**CENTURY MARK** Last season, Myles Garrett became the youngest player to reach 100 career sacks and the first player in NFL history to record 14 or more sacks in four consecutive seasons. Though things briefly got ugly between Garrett and team following Garrett's trade request, the Browns insist that Garrett is destined to go "Cleveland to Canton" as a first-ballot Hall of Fame selection after a career that began when the Browns made Garrett the No. 1 overall pick in 2017. That's one the team probably got right.

**HOMETOWN HERO** Denzel Ward is a native Northeast Ohioan who was a surprise choice at No. 4 overall in the 2018 draft. He's become one of the league's best cornerbacks and is one of the Browns' most popular and respected players. Ward is active in community endeavors and is the spokesperson for his "Make Them Know Your Name Foundation," which honors his late father, Paul. The MTKYN Foundation provides resources and education for schools and other programs in dealing with sudden cardiac issues.

TROY TAORMINA-USA TODAY SPORTS

**EXPERIENCE COUNTS** With the four healthy quarterbacks on the roster, the Browns have a total of 20 years of previous NFL experience. Joe Flacco accounts for 17 of those years and returns for a second stint in Cleveland after his magical run in December 2023 helped the Browns reach the playoffs on the heels of a four-game win streak. Flacco, 40, spent last season in Indianapolis but signed a one-year deal with the Browns last April. **Shedeur Sanders** was in kindergarten when the Ravens drafted Flacco in 2008.

**REVOLVING DOOR** Speaking of 40, the Browns have had 40 different starting quarterbacks since they returned to the NFL in 1999. Flacco is already on that list from 2023, but the list will grow if Kenny Pickett, Dillon Gabriel or Sanders starts a game this season.

# SCOUTING THE BROWNS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CLEVELAND

"What a mess they've made at quarterback. I know Jimmy Haslam admitted the Deshaun Watson trade was a mistake, but it's crippling them from a salary cap standpoint and on the field. To misfire that badly on such a big move ordinarily gets the general manager fired. In this case, Haslam doesn't want to fire Andrew Berry. And he's not going to fire himself or sell the team. … Joe Flacco is their best bet to be competitive. He still throws a good ball. … Shedeur Sanders is a very polarizing guy. We didn't like his attitude and how he handled the draft process. He wasn't prepared. He mailed it in at every step. He didn't take it seriously enough. If he figures out that he doesn't have it all figured out and applies himself, I can still see him having success. He's got a lot of tools. He's just not a great athlete, and he has to cut out some bad habits as far as taking sacks, staring down reads and patting the football excessively. … The offensive line, especially Wyatt Teller, has some assets. … David Njoku is a gifted tight end. … I see Quinshon Judkins being a problem for defenses right away. … Myles Garrett changed his mind once they threw enough dollars his way. He's a gold jacket first-ballot defensive end. Closest thing to Reggie White in a long time. … Maliek Collins' inside spin move works almost every time. … I like the Mason Graham pick. He'll be a tough blocking assignment. … Denzel Ward is a top-five corner. … Martin Emerson excels in press coverage, really strong with long arms. … Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah is a leader in words, and by example."

# 2025 BROWNS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 Flacco, Joe | QB | 6-6 | 230 | 17 | Delaware | FA-Ind-25 | D1-Bal-08 |
| 8 Pickett, Kenny | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 3 | Pitt | T-Phi-25 | D1-Pit-22 |
| 4 Watson, Deshaun | QB | 6-3 | 223 | 8 | Clemson | T-Hou-22 | D1-Hou-17 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 34 Ford, Jerome | RB | 5-10 | 210 | 3 | Cincinnati | D5-22 | D5-Cle-22 |
| 36 Hairston, Troy | FB | 5-11 | 245 | 2 | Central Michigan | FA-25 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 20 Strong Jr., Pierre | RB | 5-11 | 215 | 3 | South Dakota St. | T-NE-23 | D4b-NE-22 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 82 Bates, Brenden | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 1 | Kentucky | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 18 Bell, David | WR | 6-1 | 212 | 3 | Purdue | D3c-22 | D3c-Cle-22 |
| 2 Carter, DeAndre | WR | 5-8 | 190 | 7 | Sacramento State | FA-Chi-25 | FA-Bal-15 |
| 89 Davis, Kaden | WR | 6-1 | 193 | 1 | NW Missouri State | FA-24 | FA-Den-22 |
| 3 Jeudy, Jerry | WR | 6-1 | 195 | 5 | Alabama | T-Den-24 | D1-Den-20 |
| 16 Johnson, Diontae | WR | 5-10 | 183 | 6 | Toledo | FA-Bal-25 | D3-Pit-19 |
| 87 McKitty, Tre' | TE | 6-4 | 246 | 4 | Georgia | FA-24 | D3-LAC-21 |
| 85 Njoku, David | TE | 6-4 | 246 | 8 | Miami (Fla.) | D1c-17 | D1c-Cle-17 |
| 80 Thrash, Jamari | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | Louisville | D5-24 | D5-Cle-24 |
| 19 Tillman, Cedric | WR | 6-3 | 215 | 2 | Tennessee | D3a-23 | D3a-Cle-23 |
| 86 Whiteheart, Blake | TE | 6-4 | 250 | 2 | Wake Forest | FA-24 | FA-Ari-23 |
| 81 Woods II, Michael | WR | 6-1 | 204 | 3 | Oklahoma | D6-22 | D6-Cle-22 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75 Bitonio, Joel | G | 6-4 | 320 | 11 | Nevada | D2-14 | D2-Cle-14 |
| 67 Cohen, Javion | G | 6-4 | 322 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-24 | FA-Cle-24 |
| 78 Conklin, Jack | T | 6-6 | 308 | 9 | Michigan State | FA-Ten-20 | D1-Ten-16 |
| 74 Jenkins, Teven | T | 6-6 | 321 | 4 | Oklahoma State | FA-Chi-25 | D2-Chi-21 |
| 79 Jones, Dawand | T | 6-8 | 374 | 2 | Ohio State | D4a-23 | D4a-Cle-23 |
| 64 Latham, Brady | G/C | 6-5 | 312 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-25 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| 71 Lucas, Cornelius | T | 6-8 | 327 | 11 | Kansas State | FA-Was-25 | FA-Det-14 |
| 61 Mbaeteka, Roy | T | 6-8 | 330 | 1 | None | FA-24 | FA-NYG-22 |
| 60 Pearl, Julian | T | 6-6 | 325 | 1 | Illinois | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 55 Pocic, Ethan | C | 6-6 | 320 | 8 | LSU | FA-Sea-22 | D2b-Sea-17 |
| 77 Teller, Wyatt | G | 6-4 | 315 | 7 | Virginia Tech | T-Buf-19 | D5-Buf-18 |
| 69 Thompson, Lorenzo | T | 6-6 | 305 | 1 | Rhode Island | FA-24 | FA-Cle-24 |
| 56 Wypler, Luke | C | 6-3 | 303 | 2 | Ohio State | D6-23 | D6-Cle-23 |
| 70 Zinter, Zak | G | 6-6 | 310 | 1 | Michigan | D3-24 | D3-Cle-24 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 Briggs, Jowon | DT | 6-1 | 313 | 1 | Cincinnati | D7b-24 | D7b-Cle-24 |
| 96 Collins, Maliek | DT | 6-2 | 310 | 9 | Nebraska | FA-SF-25 | D3-Dal-16 |
| 95 Garrett, Myles | DE | 6-4 | 272 | 8 | Texas A&M | D1a-17 | D1a-Cle-17 |
| 51 Hall, Jr., Mike | DT | 6-3 | 300 | 1 | Ohio State | D2-24 | D2-Cle-24 |
| 93 Harris, Shelby | DT | 6-2 | 288 | 11 | Illinois State | FA-23 | D7-LV-14 |
| 63 Holley, Ralph | DT | 6-0 | 285 | 1 | Western Michigan | FA-25 | FA-Cle-25 |
| 92 Kamara, Sam | DT | 6-0 | 272 | 2 | Stony Brook | FA-24 | FA-Chi-21 |
| 57 McGuire, Isaiah | DE | 6-4 | 268 | 2 | Missouri | D4b-23 | D4b-Cle-23 |
| 54 Okoronkwo, Ogbo | DE | 6-2 | 250 | 7 | Oklahoma | FA-Hou-23 | D5b-LAR-18 |
| 53 Okwara, Julian | DE | 6-4 | 250 | 5 | Notre Dame | FA-Ari-25 | D3a-Det-20 |
| 52 Smith, Elerson | DE | 6-7 | 245 | 3 | Northern Iowa | FA-24 | D4-NYG-21 |
| 99 Thomas, Cameron | DE | 6-4 | 265 | 3 | San Diego State | W-KC-24 | D3-Ari-22 |
| 90 Tryon-Shoyinka, Joe | DE | 6-5 | 259 | 4 | Washington | FA-TB-25 | D1-TB-21 |
| 91 Wright, Alex | DE | 6-5 | 267 | 3 | UAB | D3b-22 | D3b-Cle-22 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 Baker, Jerome | LB | 6-2 | 232 | 7 | Ohio State | FA-Ten-25 | D3-Mia-18 |
| 30 Bush, Devin | LB | 5-11 | 235 | 6 | Michigan | FA-Sea-24 | D1-Pit-19 |
| 43 Diabate, Mohamoud | LB | 6-4 | 225 | 2 | Utah | FA-23 | FA-Cle-23 |
| 58 Hicks, Jordan | LB | 6-1 | 235 | 10 | Texas | FA-Min-24 | D3-Phi-15 |
| 6 Owusu-Koramoah, J. | LB | 6-2 | 221 | 4 | Notre Dame | D2-21 | D2-Cle-21 |
| 59 Reid, Winston | LB | 6-0 | 225 | 1 | Weber State | FA-24 | FA-Cle-24 |
| 40 Watson, Nathaniel | LB | 6-0 | 233 | 1 | Mississippi State | D6-24 | D6-Cle-24 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 Anusiem, Chigozie | CB | 6-1 | 200 | 1 | Colorado State | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |
| 38 Brown II, Tony | CB | 6-0 | 200 | 7 | Alabama | FA-Ind-24 | FA-LAC-18 |
| 9 Delpit, Grant | S | 6-3 | 208 | 5 | LSU | D2-20 | D2-Cle-20 |
| 41 Edmonds, Christopher | S | 6-2 | 210 | 1 | Arizona State | FA-24 | FA-Cle-24 |
| 23 Emerson Jr., Martin | CB | 6-2 | 201 | 3 | Mississippi State | D3a-22 | D3a-Cle-22 |
| 26 Harden, Myles | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 1 | South Dakota | D7a-24 | D7a-Cle-24 |
| 33 Hickman, Ronnie | S | 6-1 | 209 | 2 | Ohio State | FA-23 | FA-Cle-23 |
| Jenkins, Rayshawn | S | 6-1 | 220 | 9 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-25 | D4-LAC-17 |
| Kazee, Damontae | S | 5-11 | 174 | 9 | San Diego State | FA-25 | D5-ATL-17 |
| 44 Kendall, Anthony | CB | 5-10 | 188 | 2 | Baldwin Wallace | FA-25 | FA-Ten-23 |
| 29 Mitchell, Cameron | CB | 5-11 | 191 | 2 | Northwestern | D5b-23 | D5b-Cle-23 |
| Needham, Nik | CB | 6-1 | 196 | 6 | UTEP | FA-25 | FA-Mia-19 |
| 0 Newsome II, Greg | CB | 6-0 | 192 | 4 | Northwestern | D1-21 | D1-Cle-21 |
| 21 Ward, Denzel | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 7 | Ohio State | D1b-18 | D1b-Cle-18 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 Bojorquez, Corey | P | 6-0 | 217 | 7 | New Mexico | FA-GB-22 | FA-NE-18 |
| 7 Hopkins, Dustin | K | 6-2 | 210 | 11 | Florida State | T-LAC-23 | D6-Buf-13 |
| 50 Sunahara, Rex | LS | 6-6 | 242 | 1 | West Virginia | FA-24 | FA-Mia-20 |
| 10 Szmyt, Andre | K | 6-0 | 200 | 1 | Syracuse | FA-24 | FA-Chi-23 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 3 | Jerry Jeudy | 80 | Jamari Thrash |
| WR | 19 | Cedric Tillman | 81 | Michael Woods II |
| LT | 79 | Dawand Jones | 69 | Lorenzo Thompson |
| LG | 75 | Joel Bitonio | 74 | Teven Jenkins |
| C | 55 | Ethan Pocic | 56 | Luke Wypler |
| RG | 77 | Wyatt Teller | 70 | Zak Zinter |
| RT | 78 | Jack Conklin | 71 | Cornelius Lucas |
| TE | 85 | David Njoku | 86 | Blake Whiteheart |
| TE | 5 | Harold Fannin Jr. (R) | 87 | Tre' McKitty |
| QB | 15 | Joe Flacco | 8 | Kenny Pickett |
| RB | 10 | Quinshon Judkins (R) | 34 | Jerome Ford |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 95 | Myles Garrett | 90 | Joe Tryon-Shoyinka |
| DT | 96 | Maliek Collins | 51 | Mike Hall Jr. |
| DT | 94 | Mason Graham (R) | 93 | Shelby Harris |
| DE | 91 | Alex Wright | 57 | Isaiah McGuire |
| OLB | 17 | Jerome Baker | 30 | Devin Bush |
| MLB | 58 | Jordan Hicks | 59 | Winston Reid |
| OLB | 49 | Carson Schwesinger (R) | 40 | Nathaniel Watson |
| CB | 21 | Denzel Ward | 29 | Cameron Mitchell |
| CB | 23 | Martin Emerson Jr. | 0 | Greg Newsome II |
| S | 9 | Grant Delpit | 41 | Christopher Edmonds |
| S | 33 | Ronnie Hickman | 28 | Trey Dean III |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 7 | Dustin Hopkins | KR | 34 | Jerome Ford |
| P | 13 | Corey Bojorquez | PR | 2 | DeAndre Carter |

**-51.1%**

Deshaun Watson's passing DVOA was the worst in the history of the Cleveland Browns, according to FTN's Aaron Schatz.

# BROWNS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mason Graham | DT | 6-3 | 296 | Michigan |
| 2 | Carson Schwesinger | OLB | 6-2 | 242 | UCLA |
| 2 | Quinshon Judkins | RB | 5-11 | 221 | Ohio State |
| 3 | Harold Fannin Jr. | TE | 6-3 | 241 | Bowling Green |
| 3 | Dillon Gabriel | QB | 5-11 | 205 | Oregon |
| 4 | Dylan Sampson | RB | 5-8 | 200 | Tennessee |
| 5 | Shedeur Sanders | QB | 6-1 | 212 | Colorado |

In trading out of the No. 2 pick, the Browns were primarily focused on the 2026 first-round pick they acquired from Jacksonville. Mason Graham is an immediate starter and is certainly no consolation prize, but the Browns are thinking about their future. Things got weird after the first four picks as the Browns ended up taking two quarterbacks — and drafting Dillon Gabriel much earlier than any projection had him going. Quinshon Judkins figures to be the starting running back sooner than later, and Dylan Sampson should also see immediate snaps. Carson Schwesinger was a surprise pick, but the Browns believe he's an ascending player with above-average instincts and tackling ability.

# STEELERS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Seattle | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Minnesota (Dublin) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 5 | BYE | |
| Oct. 12 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Oct. 16 | at Cincinnati | 8:15 |
| Oct. 26 | Green Bay | 8:20 |
| Nov. 2 | Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | at L.A. Chargers | 8:20 |
| Nov. 16 | Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at Chicago | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | Buffalo | 4:25 |
| Dec. 7 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Dec. 15 | Miami | 8:15 |
| Dec. 21 | at Detroit | 4:25 |
| Dec. 28 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| TBD | Baltimore | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 12 |
| 2021 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| 2022 | | 9 |
| 2023 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |
| 2024 | AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Mike Tomlin
**Record With Team:** 183-107-2
**Career Record:** 183-107-2
**Offensive Coordinator:** Arthur Smith
**Defensive Coordinator:** Teryl Austin
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Danny Smith
**Quarterbacks:** Tom Arth
**Running Backs:** Eddie Faulkner
**Wide Receivers:** Zach Azzanni
**Tight Ends:** Alfredo Roberts
**Offensive Line:** Pat Meyer
**Defensive Line:** Karl Dunbar
**Outside Linebackers:** Denzel Martin
**Inside Linebackers:** Scott McCurley
**Defensive Backs:** Gerald Alexander

AFC NORTH FORECAST

**3**

The Steelers' big shakeup at quarterback for 2024 didn't provide much of a change to the end result — another sluggish end to the regular season followed by an early playoff exit. So, one year after the failed Russell Wilson-Justin Fields experiment, the Steelers appear poised to go even bigger and bolder to try to get over the hump and deep into the postseason. Though nothing was official heading into the heart of the Steelers' offseason program, Aaron Rodgers appears poised to be the new main man in the city Mr. Rogers called home. With Rodgers in the fold, the Steelers would be banking on a comeback season from the veteran quarterback to add some juice to a Mike Tomlin-led product that's stuck in a rut of falling short of Pittsburgh's sky-high expectations.

## OFFENSE

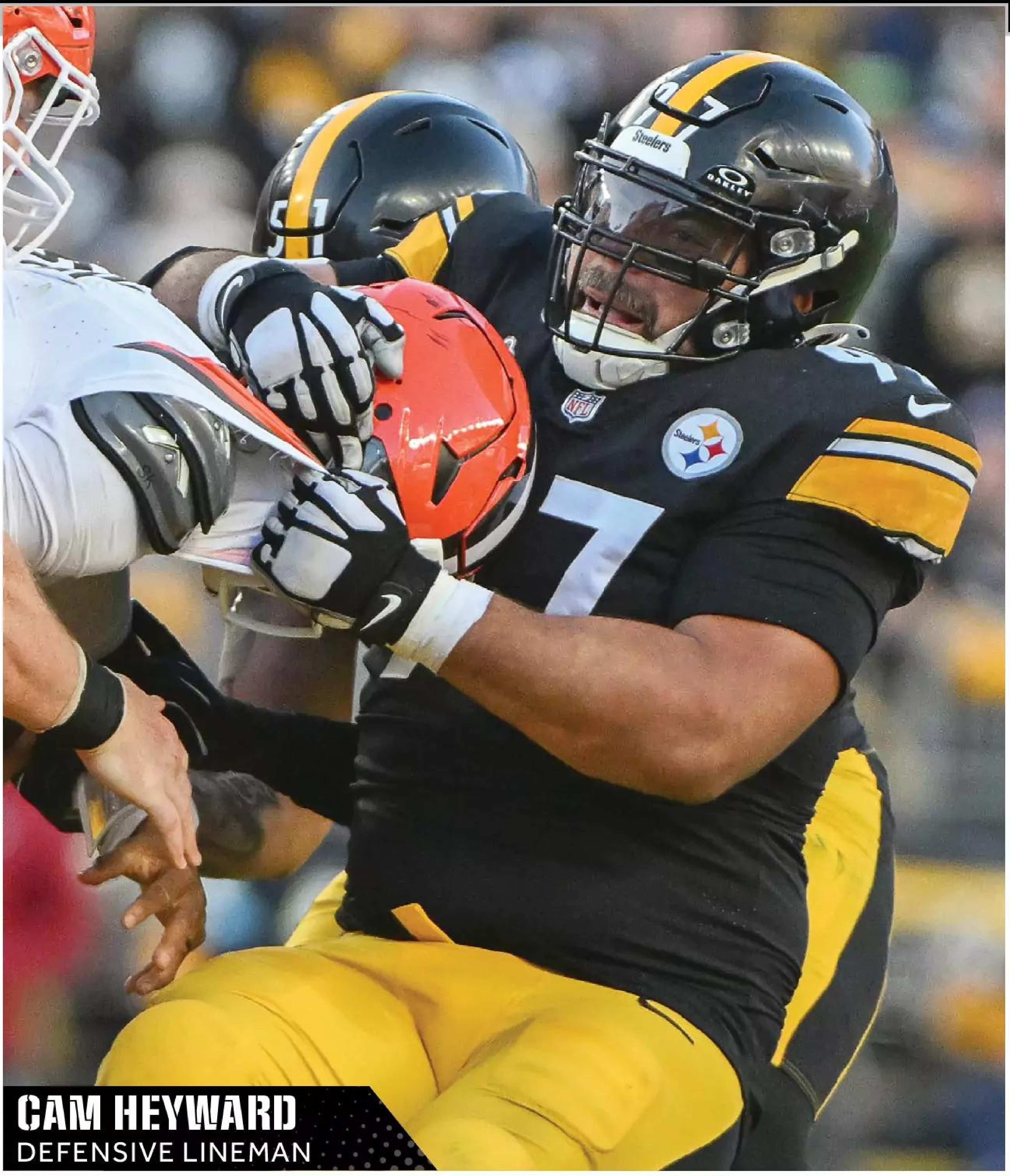
Pittsburgh has made big changes at the three spots that touch the ball the most — quarterback, running back and wide receiver — in hopes of shaking last season's doldrums.

Rodgers, of course, would be the star attraction. Undoubtedly, the polarizing veteran's best football is behind him, but the Steelers would be banking on his 20-plus years of experience to give a jolt to their stagnant offense. In his first season back from a torn Achilles, Rodgers' mobility had clearly declined, and his ability to push the ball down the field — his average yards per attempt of 6.78 tied his career low as a starter — was limited.

In Pittsburgh, though, Rodgers would be one year healthier and surrounded by an improved supporting cast. It starts up front, where Pittsburgh has invested valuable draft capital across the offensive line. Four of the five expected starters were added in recent drafts, including two first-round selections at the tackle position (LT Broderick Jones and RT Troy Fautanu). The only exception is veteran Pro Bowl guard Isaac Seumalo, who is rock-solid on the left side of the line. If Mr. Rodgers doesn't come to town, the Steelers will lean on a familiar face, Mason Rudolph, who rejoined the team after spending the previous season with the Titans. Rudolph has 18 career starts, 13 coming with the Steelers. He's been effective (8-4-1 as the Steelers' starter) when called upon.

At wide receiver, Pittsburgh acquired a massive target in trading with Seattle for DK Metcalf. The seventh-year veteran has been the model of consistency, posting no fewer than 900 yards in each season and clearing 1,000 yards on three occasions. Metcalf's mix of size, speed and overall strength is largely unmatched across the NFL, and he brings the kind of physicality Steelers fans love. He's an upgrade over oft-troubled receiver George Pickens, who was sent to Dallas after three rocky seasons with the Steelers. The rest of Pittsburgh's pass-catchers leave a bit to be desired, though there's hope that Calvin Austin III can ascend in his third season and Roman Wilson can make an impact after not seeing the field as a rookie in 2024. Pat Freiermuth could very well emerge as the second option in the passing game after racking up a career-best 65 receptions last season.

The Steelers let Najee Harris walk in free agency and swiftly replaced him with rookie Kaleb Johnson, who figures to take over as the bell-cow running back in Pittsburgh's two-man backfield. Flanked by big-play threat Jaylen Warren, Johnson should provide a similar punch to Harris with a little more pop potential. If Johnson pans out, the Steelers could very well boast one of the NFL's better rushing attacks after finishing 11th in the NFL last season.



**CAM HEYWARD**
DEFENSIVE LINEMAN

BARRY REEGER-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

For much of 2024, the Steelers' defense looked like its typical vaunted self, allowing a struggling offense to work through its issues while still collecting low-scoring wins. The end, though, is what stuck with Pittsburgh throughout the offseason and inspired it to retool a unit that gave up big chunks of yards and points to some of the NFL's best quarterbacks in five straight losses to close out the season.

Up front, the Steelers have always been big, strong and tough. It's Pittsburgh, after all. The Steelers, though, made a concerted effort to get even bigger and, more importantly, younger across the defensive line. First-round pick Derrick Harmon is the biggest headlining addition, and he'll get an opportunity right away — thanks to the departure of veteran Larry Ogunjobi — to start on the opposite side of veteran Cam Heyward. Fifth-rounder Yahya Black, who checks in at 336 pounds, will provide some nice depth behind nose tackle Keeanu Benton, who had a solid second season. There's no telling when Heyward, 36, will let up, but if his performance in 2024 was any indication, it won't be anytime soon. The 2023 Walter Payton Man of the Year is coming off one of his best seasons to date and is poised for another big campaign as he enters his 15th with the black and gold.

Pittsburgh didn't change much in its linebacking corps because it didn't need to. Led by All-Everything pass rusher T.J. Watt, the Steelers have a group that is chock full of players currently in their prime. Watt was his usual self in 2024, collecting 11.5 sacks and an NFL-best six forced fumbles, but his production dropped off a bit during the Steelers' miserable finish. That will be something to monitor in 2025, as Pittsburgh could look to move him around on defense in hopes of avoiding constant double-teams. Alex Highsmith and Nick Herbig relish those double-teams and look to maximize their opportunities when so much attention is devoted to Watt. Fourth-round pick and former All-American Jack Sawyer seemed destined to be a Steeler, and it's hard to imagine a scenario in which he doesn't have a significant role on the defense. Manning the middle of the unit is ultra-reliable Patrick Queen, who was a mainstay and tackle machine for Pittsburgh in his first year with the team.

The Steelers have made a habit of adding a veteran defensive back with some gas left in the tank, and they did it again for 2025 with the signing of "Big Play" Darius Slay. The Super Bowl champion cornerback is entering his 13th season and is still playing at a high level — perhaps not quite as high as previous years, but still an upgrade across from Joey Porter Jr. Minkah Fitzpatrick is coming off another Pro Bowl season, but the big plays he used to make have been fewer and farther between. Since 2022, when he had six interceptions, Fitzpatrick has picked off just one pass and forced one fumble.

## SPECIALISTS

It will be hard to top what Chris Boswell accomplished in 2024, but he'll be looking to at least maintain thar clip. The 11-year veteran made a franchise-record 41 field goals, including 13 from 50-plus yards, serving as a difference-maker for a Steelers team that needed any points it could get. There's a bit of uncertainty at punter, as veteran Cameron Johnston will be looking to return from a knee injury that kept him out of all but one game in 2024. Corliss Waitman, who filled in for Johnston last year, will be waiting in the wings.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Steelers can never be dismissed, but there's just so much uncertainty at the game's most important position. The Steelers always seem to find their way to a winning record, and they'll probably do it again in 2025, but getting over the hump that's dogged them in recent years would require a big bounce-back from Rodgers — or an unexpectedly big season from Rudolph — and more consistency down the stretch from Pittsburgh's veteran-heavy defense.

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Atlanta | W | 18-10 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Denver | W | 13-6 |
| Sept. | 22 | L.A. Chargers | W | 20-10 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Indianapolis | L | 24-27 |
| Oct. | 6 | Dallas | L | 17-20 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Las Vegas | W | 32-13 |
| Oct. | 20 | N.Y. Jets | W | 37-15 |
| Oct. | 28 | N.Y. Giants | W | 26-18 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Washington | W | 28-27 |
| Nov. | 17 | Baltimore | W | 18-16 |
| Nov. | 21 | at Cleveland | L | 19-24 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Cincinnati | W | 44-38 |
| Dec. | 8 | Cleveland | W | 27-14 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Philadelphia | L | 13-27 |
| Dec. | 21 | at Baltimore | L | 17-34 |
| Dec. | 25 | Kansas City | L | 10-29 |
| Jan. | 4 | Cincinnati | L | 17-19 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 11 | at Baltimore | L | 14-28 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 319.4 | 23 | 10 |
| Rushing | 127.4 | 11 | 4 |
| Passing | 192.0 | 27 | 15 |
| Scoring | 22.4 | 16 | 7 |
| Third Down % | 39.5 | T14 | T7 |
| Points/Play | 0.350 | 20 | 9 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 326.7 | 12 | 9 |
| Rushing | 98.7 | 6 | 3 |
| Passing | 228.0 | 25 | 13 |
| Scoring | 20.4 | 8 | 4 |
| Interceptions | 17 | T3 | 2 |
| Sacks | 40 | T16 | 7 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.339 | 7 | 4 |
| TO Differential | +16 | 2 | 2 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Russell Wilson | 336 | 214 | 2,482 | 16 | 5 |
| Justin Fields | 161 | 106 | 1,106 | 5 | 1 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Najee Harris | 263 | 1,043 | 4.0 | 6 |
| Jaylen Warren | 120 | 511 | 4.3 | 1 |
| Justin Fields | 62 | 289 | 4.7 | 5 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pat Freiermuth | 65 | 653 | 10.0 | 7 |
| George Pickens | 59 | 900 | 15.3 | 3 |
| Jaylen Warren | 38 | 310 | 8.2 | 0 |
| Calvin Austin III | 36 | 548 | 15.2 | 4 |
| Najee Harris | 36 | 283 | 7.9 | 0 |

**KICKING:** Chris Boswell, 41-44 FGs, 35-35 PATs, 158 points
**TACKLES:** Patrick Queen, 129; DeShon Elliott, 108
**SACKS:** T.J. Watt 11.5; Cameron Heyward, 8.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Donte Jackson, 5; Beanie Bishop, 4

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**THE CANDY MAN** New Steelers wide receiver DK Metcalf has been known to divulge plenty of tidbits about his unique diet. Namely, he loves eating candy — lots and lots of candy. It doesn't show, of course, as Metcalf is one of the biggest and strongest wide receivers in the league, measuring at a sculpted 6-foot-4 and 229 pounds. To say Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin doesn't mind Metcalf's diet choices would be an understatement. Asked in March about Metcalf, Tomlin used the opportunity to rib the reporter who asked about it. "Really?" Tomlin asked with a smile on his face. "He wears it a little different than you."

**"STEELERS DNA"** The tape didn't lie, but the Steelers did a little more internal research before selecting Ohio State All-America linebacker **Jack Sawyer** in the fourth round of the NFL Draft. Tomlin said Sawyer had "Steelers DNA," and the pick was endorsed by All-Pro defensive lineman Cam Heyward, a former Buckeye himself. Sawyer was over the moon about his NFL destination, and Heyward had a lot to do with it. "I've actually talked to Cam Heyward a few times," Sawyer said in his post-draft conference call. "He's obviously one of the best human beings there is and one of the best football players that have ever played the game. And him being an Ohio State guy, too, I'm excited to hopefully get to learn a lot of stuff from him."

ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

**THE FINISHER** Steelers offensive coordinator Arthur Smith is pumped to have Kaleb Johnson on board after landing the Iowa running back in the third round. The thing he loves most about Johnson? How he finishes games. Per Smith, Johnson averaged somewhere between five and six yards per carry in the fourth quarters of games. That will go a long way for the Steelers, who have found themselves in quite a few nail-biting, low-scoring games in recent years. "We think he's a great culture fit," Smith told reporters after the draft. "Obviously extremely fired up to get Kaleb in here."

# SCOUTING THE STEELERS

**OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PITTSBURGH** "At press time, Aaron Rodgers remained a free agent despite confidence expressed by [owner] Art Rooney that he's going to eventually sign with them. If he decides to retire or play for someone else, they're in trouble. Mason Rudolph is a backup, not starting material. He can win you a few games, in a pinch, but he's not the answer to the problem. Lots of change in the offensive backfield with Najee Harris gone and rookie Kaleb Johnson projected as the new starter ahead of Jaylen Warren. Johnson is a downhill runner with a good nose for the end zone. … Warren is a nice all-around back. … DK Metcalf is really hard to stop. They haven't had a receiver this talented since Antonio Brown. Whoever winds up playing quarterback for Pittsburgh should be able to have success on deep balls. … Not a bad offensive line at all. This five works very well together. … T.J. Watt is looking for a new contract, and I hear it's going to get close to Myles Garrett money. … Derrick Harmon is a true plug-and-play rookie in that 3-4 scheme. … Cam Heyward keeps getting older, but he's aging like a fine wine. He takes great care of himself. … The Ravens didn't want to pay Patrick Queen, but he's been a solid add for their rivals. … Getting Darius Slay at a bargain price was a coup. … Minkah Fitzpatrick is in the top three to four safeties in the game. … I still think Joey Porter Jr. figures it out and becomes a high-end starter."

## 2025 STEELERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 Rudolph, Mason | QB | 6-5 | 235 | 7 | Oklahoma State | FA-Ten-25 | D3a-Pit-18 |
| 17 Thompson, Skylar | QB | 6-2 | 210 | 3 | Kansas State | FA-25 | D7b-Mia-22 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 Gainwell, Kenneth | RB | 5-9 | 200 | 4 | Memphis | FA-Phi-25 | D5-Phi-21 |
| 38 Hull, Evan | RB | 5-10 | 209 | 2 | Northwestern | FA-25 | D5d-Ind-23 |
| 84 Patterson, Cordarrelle | RB | 6-2 | 232 | 12 | Tennessee | FA-Atl-24 | D1c-Min-13 |
| Sermon, Trey | RB | 6-0 | 215 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-Ind-25 | D3-SF-21 |
| 35 Ward, Jonathan | RB | 6-0 | 202 | 5 | Central Michigan | FA-24 | FA-Ari-20 |
| 30 Warren, Jaylen | RB | 5-8 | 215 | 3 | Oklahoma State | FA-22 | FA-Pit-22 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 Austin III, Calvin | WR | 5-9 | 162 | 3 | Memphis | D4-22 | D4-Pit-22 |
| 88 Freiermuth, Pat | TE | 6-5 | 258 | 4 | Penn State | D2-21 | D2-Pit-21 |
| 83 Heyward, Connor | TE | 6-0 | 230 | 3 | Michigan State | D6-22 | D6-Pit-22 |
| 89 Johnson, Brandon | WR | 6-2 | 195 | 3 | UCF | FA-24 | FA-Den-22 |
| 82 McCutcheon, Lance | WR | 6-3 | 202 | 1 | Montana State | FA-25 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 4 Metcalf, DK | WR | 6-4 | 229 | 6 | Ole Miss | T-Sea-25 | D2b-Sea-19 |
| 13 Miller, Scotty | WR | 5-9 | 174 | 6 | Bowling Green | FA-24 | D6-TB-19 |
| 89 Parham Jr., Donald | TE | 6-8 | 240 | 5 | Stetson | FA-25 | FA-Det-19 |
| 15 Skowronek, Ben | WR | 6-3 | 224 | 3 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | D7-LAR-21 |
| 80 Washington, Darnell | TE | 6-7 | 264 | 2 | Georgia | D3-23 | D3-Pit-23 |
| 10 Wilson, Roman | WR | 6-0 | 192 | 1 | Michigan | D3a-24 | D3a-Pit-24 |
| 16 Woods, Robert | WR | 6-0 | 193 | 12 | USC | FA-Hou-25 | D2a-Buf-13 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 67 Anderson, Calvin | OL | 6-5 | 305 | 5 | Texas | FA-24 | FA-NE-19 |
| 74 Anderson, Spencer | OL | 6-5 | 305 | 1 | Maryland | D7b-23 | D7b-Pit-23 |
| 60 Cook, Dylan | T | 6-5 | 280 | 2 | Montana | FA-23 | FA-TB-22 |
| 76 Fautanu, Troy | T | 6-4 | 317 | 1 | Washington | D1-24 | D1-Pit-24 |
| 54 Frazier, Zach | C | 6-3 | 310 | 2 | West Virginia | D2-24 | D2-Pit-24 |
| 77 Jones, Broderick | T | 6-5 | 311 | 2 | Georgia | D1-23 | D1-Pit-23 |
| 69 Jones, Steven | T | 6-5 | 342 | 1 | Oregon | FA-25 | FA-Jac-24 |
| 62 McCollum, Ryan | C | 6-5 | 300 | 3 | Texas A&M | W-Det-22 | FA-Hou-21 |
| 66 McCormick, Mason | G | 6-5 | 315 | 1 | South Dakota St. | D4-24 | D4-Pit-24 |
| 72 Nester, Doug | T | 6-6 | 306 | 1 | West Virginia | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 64 Scharping, Max | G | 6-6 | 325 | 6 | Northern Illinois | PS-Was-24 | D2b-Hou-19 |
| 73 Seumalo, Isaac | OL | 6-4 | 303 | 9 | Oregon State | FA-Phi-23 | D3-Phi-16 |
| 61 Smith, Lecitus | C | 6-3 | 314 | 2 | Virginia Tech | W-NE-25 | D6-Ari-22 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95 Benton, Keeanu | DT | 6-4 | 309 | 2 | Wisconsin | D2b-23 | D2b-Pit-23 |
| 69 Davis, Domenique | DT | 6-2 | 330 | 1 | NC-Pembroke | FA-25 | FA-NYJ-20 |
| 96 Ekuale, Daniel | DT | 6-3 | 310 | 6 | Washington State | FA-NE-25 | FA-Cle-18 |
| 97 Heyward, Cam | DT | 6-5 | 295 | 14 | Ohio State | D1-11 | D1-Pit-11 |
| 98 Leal, DeMarvin | DE | 6-4 | 290 | 3 | Texas A&M | D3-22 | D3-Pit-22 |
| 61 Lee, Logan | DL | 6-5 | 291 | 1 | Iowa | D6a-24 | D6a-Pit-24 |
| 92 Loudermilk, Isaiahh | DT | 6-7 | 293 | 4 | Wisconsin | D5-21 | D5-Pit-21 |
| 94 Lowry, Dean | DL | 6-6 | 296 | 8 | Northwestern | FA-Min-24 | D4b-GB-16 |
| 72 Otomewo, Esezi | DL | 6-5 | 282 | 3 | Minnesota | FA-Jac-25 | D5-Min-22 |
| 79 Slade, Jacob | DL | 6-3 | 293 | 1 | Michigan State | FA-24 | FA-Ari-23 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91 Golden, Markus | LB | 6-3 | 260 | 10 | Missouri | FA-24 | D2-Ari-15 |
| 40 Harper, Devin | LB | 6-0 | 240 | 3 | Oklahoma State | FA-24 | D6-Dal-22 |
| 50 Harrison, Malik | LB | 6-3 | 255 | 5 | Ohio State | FA-Bal-25 | D3c-Bal-20 |
| 51 Herbig, Nick | LB | 6-2 | 240 | 3 | Wisconsin | D4-23 | D4-Pit-23 |
| 56 Highsmith, Alex | LB | 6-4 | 242 | 5 | Charlotte | D3-20 | D3-Pit-20 |
| 55 Holcomb, Cole | LB | 6-1 | 240 | 6 | North Carolina | FA-Was-23 | D5b-Was-19 |
| 53 Leota, Eku | LB | 6-4 | 257 | 2 | Auburn | FA-24 | FA-Car-23 |
| 49 Moon, Jeremiah | LB | 6-5 | 245 | 3 | Florida | W-Bal-24 | FA-Bal-22 |
| 6 Queen, Patrick | LB | 6-0 | 230 | 5 | LSU | FA-Bal-24 | D1-Bal-20 |
| 93 Robinson, Mark | LB | 5-11 | 235 | 3 | Ole Miss | D7a-22 | D7a-Pit-22 |
| 90 Watt, T.J. | LB | 6-4 | 252 | 8 | Wisconsin | D1-17 | D1-Pit-17 |
| 45 Welschof, Julius | LB | 6-6 | 265 | 1 | Charlotte | FA-24 | FA-Pit-24 |
| 41 Wilson, Payton | LB | 6-4 | 242 | 1 | NC State | D3b-24 | D3b-Pit-24 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 Bishop Jr., Beanie | CB | 5-10 | 184 | 1 | West Virginia | FA-24 | FA-Pit-24 |
| 35 Bledsoe, Joshuah | S | 5-11 | 207 | 3 | Missouri | FA-25 | D6-NE-21 |
| 26 Echols, Brandin | CB | 5-10 | 179 | 5 | Kentucky | FA-NYJ-25 | D6b-NYJ-21 |
| 25 Elliott, DeShon | S | 6-1 | 210 | 6 | Texas | FA-Mia-24 | D6a-Bal-18 |
| 39 Fitzpatrick, Minkah | S | 6-1 | 207 | 7 | Alabama | T-Mia-19 | D1-Mia-18 |
| 34 Gilbert, Zyon | CB | 6-0 | 193 | 2 | Florida Atlantic | FA-24 | FA-NYG-22 |
| 5 Jamison, D'Shawn | CB | 6-2 | 185 | 2 | Texas | FA-24 | FA-SF-23 |
| 28 Killebrew, Miles | S | 6-2 | 222 | 9 | Southern Utah | FA-22 | D4-Pit-16 |
| 38 McCutcheon, Cameron | CB | 6-1 | 204 | 1 | Western Carolina | FA-25 | FA-LAR-23 |
| 33 McMichael, Kyler | CB | 6-0 | 202 | 1 | North Carolina | FA-25 | FA-TB-22 |
| 42 Pierre, James | CB | 6-2 | 185 | 7 | Florida Atlantic | FA-24 | FA-Pit-20 |
| 24 Porter Jr., Joey | CB | 6-2 | 193 | 2 | Penn State | D2a-23 | D2a-Pit-23 |
| 23 Slay, Darius | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 12 | Mississippi State | FA-Phi-25 | D2-Det-13 |
| 22 Thornhill, Juan | S | 6-0 | 205 | 6 | Virginia | FA-Cle-25 | D2b-KC-19 |
| 27 Trice Jr., Cory | CB | 6-3 | 206 | 1 | Purdue | D7a-23 | D7a-Pit-23 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Boswell, Chris | K | 6-2 | 185 | 10 | Rice | FA-15 | FA-Hou-14 |
| 5 Johnston, Cameron | P | 5-11 | 194 | 7 | Ohio State | FA-Hou-24 | FA-Phi-17 |
| 46 Kuntz, Christian | LS | 6-1 | 228 | 5 | Duquesne | FA-20 | FA-NE-17 |
| 8 Waitman, Corliss | P | 6-2 | 210 | 3 | South Alabama | FA-24 | FA-Pit-20 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 16 | Robert Woods | 10 | Roman Wilson |
| WR | 4 | DK Metcalf | 15 | Ben Skowronek |
| WR | 19 | Calvin Austin III | 13 | Scotty Miller |
| LT | 77 | Broderick Jones | 67 | Calvin Anderson |
| LG | 73 | Isaac Seumalo | 74 | Spencer Anderson |
| C | 54 | Zach Frazier | 62 | Ryan McCollum |
| RG | 66 | Mason McCormick | 74 | Spencer Anderson |
| RT | 76 | Troy Fautanu | 79 | Steven Jones |
| TE | 88 | Pat Freiermuth | 80 | Darnell Washington |
| QB | | Aaron Rodgers* | 2 | Mason Rudolph |
| RB | 30 | Jaylen Warren | 20 | Kaleb Johnson (R) |

**unsigned at press time*

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 99 | Derrick Harmon (R) | 92 | Isaiahh Loudermilk |
| NT | 95 | Keeanu Benton | 78 | Yahya Black (R) |
| DE | 97 | Cam Heyward | 96 | Daniel Ekuale |
| SLB | 56 | Alex Highsmith | 98 | DeMarvin Leal |
| ILB | 6 | Patrick Queen | 55 | Cole Holcomb |
| ILB | 41 | Payton Wilson | 50 | Malik Harrison |
| WLB | 90 | T.J. Watt | 51 | Nick Herbig |
| CB | 23 | Darius Slay | 27 | Cory Trice Jr. |
| CB | 24 | Joey Porter Jr. | 42 | James Pierre |
| SS | 25 | DeShon Elliott | 28 | Miles Killebrew |
| FS | 39 | Minkah Fitzpatrick | 22 | Juan Thornhill |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 9 | Chris Boswell | KR | 21 | Kenneth Gainwell |
| P | 5 | Cameron Johnston | PR | 19 | Calvin Austin III |

**29.1%, 25.9%**

George Pickens (second, 29.1%) and DK Metcalf (fourth, 25.9%) both finished in the top five for highest percentage of targets as deep balls per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## STEELERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Derrick Harmon | DT | 6-4 | 313 | Oregon |
| 3 | Kaleb Johnson | RB | 6-1 | 224 | Iowa |
| 4 | Jack Sawyer | OLB | 6-4 | 260 | Ohio State |
| 5 | Yahya Black | DT | 6-5 | 336 | Iowa |
| 6 | Will Howard | QB | 6-4 | 236 | Ohio State |
| 7 | Carson Bruener | LB | 6-1 | 227 | Washington |
| 7 | Donte Kent | CB | 5-10 | 189 | Central Michigan |

The Steelers got bigger and stronger on their defensive line, first by adding Derrick Harmon with the 21st pick in the first round and again with the addition of Yahya Black in the fifth. This was a concerted effort for Pittsburgh, which wants to see better production and toughness from its D-line. Getting Kaleb Johnson in the third round was seen as a bit of a steal for the Steelers, who now have a readymade replacement for Najee Harris. Jack Sawyer and Will Howard, both of whom are coming off a national championship at nearby Ohio State, provided a couple of big names for Steelers fans to get excited about on the draft's final day. Sawyer will have a chance to latch on as a rotational player, while Howard will provide much-needed depth in a thin QB room.

# TEXANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

1

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at L.A. Rams | 4:25 |
| Sept. 15 | Tampa Bay | 7:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | BYE | |
| Oct. 20 | at Seattle | 10:00 |
| Oct. 26 | San Francisco | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | Denver | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Nov. 20 | Buffalo | 8:15 |
| Nov. 30 | at Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Kansas City | 8:20 |
| Dec. 14 | Arizona | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | Las Vegas | 4:25 |
| TBD | at L.A. Chargers | |
| TBD | Indianapolis | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 4 |
| 2021 | 4 |
| 2022 | 3 |
| 2023 AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |
| 2024 AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** DeMeco Ryans
**Record With Team:** 20-14
**Career Record:** 20-14
**Offensive Coordinator:** Nick Caley
**Defensive Coordinator:** Matt Burke
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Frank Ross
**Quarterbacks:** Jerrod Johnson
**Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs:** Danny Barrett
**Wide Receivers/Pass Game Coordinator:** Ben McDaniels
**Tight Ends:** Jake Moreland
**Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator:** Cole Popovich
**Defensive Line:** Rod Wright
**Linebackers:** Bill Davis
**Defensive Backs:** Dino Vasso
**Safeties:** Stephen Adegoke

Inside the posh Breakers hotel during the league meetings in March, Houston Texans owner Cal McNair emphasized three words about the state of the defending AFC South champs: "Pretty darn close."

The Texans have grown tired of losing in the AFC divisional round, falling to 0-6 all-time at that stage of the playoffs in January when they lost to the Kansas City Chiefs. As McNair and his wife, team foundation vice president Hannah McNair, see it, the Texans are poised to "take another step."

There's justification for optimism. Under head coach DeMeco Ryans' leadership, the Texans have won back-to-back division titles. They return a former NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year in quarterback C.J. Stroud and a former NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year in end Will Anderson Jr. Stroud can hand it off to Pro Bowl running back Joe Mixon or throw it to star receiver Nico Collins.

They rewarded All-Pro Derek Stingley Jr. with a $90 million extension to make him the highest-paid cornerback in the game. Ball-hawking safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson was acquired in a trade from the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles to make an already loaded secondary an elite unit.

"Championship or nothing," Gardner-Johnson says. "Didn't bring me here to win the division, or the conference. I think we're going to get it real soon."

## OFFENSE

The most dramatic offseason move was firing coordinator Bobby Slowik. He was dismissed largely due to a failure to adapt his schemes to counteract defenses, or to listen to input from key players and staff.

Nick Caley is Slowik's replacement, and he's expected to implement an offense well-schooled in concepts from his time working for Sean McVay, Bill Belichick and Josh McDaniels. The emphasis: marrying game plans tailored to personnel and matchups with the ability to change on the fly every week.

Stroud has the necessary attributes of accuracy, arm strength and enough mobility and savvy to improvise. His regression statistically was primarily chalked up to substandard pass protection, and he appears ready to bounce back in his third season. He'll have more freedom to audible plays and protections.

That all sounds good on paper. However, if an overhauled offensive line doesn't improve dramatically, the offense will remain stuck in neutral. Stroud was sacked 52 times last season. The Texans traded away Pro Bowl left tackle Laremy Tunsil, mostly for "Moneyball" reasons. They cut declining guard Shaq Mason and traded disappointing former first-round pick Kenyon Green. Veteran Cam Robinson is penciled in to replace Tunsil.

Tytus Howard can play left guard or right tackle and is one of the few starters retained under a restructured contract. Rookie tackle Aireontae Ersery has upside, but he will need time to develop. Right tackle Blake Fisher will be challenged for the job after a rough playoff game against the Chiefs. Trent Brown is an option at right tackle, as are Howard and Ersery. Right guard is up for grabs between Juice Scruggs and Ed Ingram. Jarret Patterson has good technique and communicates well. He's trying to hold off former New England Patriot Jake Andrews at center. Former Pro Bowl guard Laken Tomlinson is in the mix, too.

Offensive line coach Chris Strausser was fired and replaced by Cole Popovich, who was promoted to offensive line coach/run game coordinator. Popovich and Caley are former Patriots colleagues who share a language learned from Belichick and Dante Scarnecchia in New England.

**DEREK STINGLEY JR.**
CORNERBACK

RAY SEEBECK-IMAGN IMAGES

Receiver has proven commodities in Collins, a No. 1 type who has elite size and athleticism at 6-foot-4, 222 pounds with 4.4 speed, and Christian Kirk, the consummate slot receiver as the No. 2. Adding a basketball-sized rookie receiver in Jayden Higgins and his college teammate Jaylin Noel to the slot should give the receiving room a boost.

Tight end Dalton Schultz is coming off a rough year and hasn't lived up to his $36 million contract. The Texans hope Caley, who coached Rob Gronkowski in New England, can rejuvenate Schultz's game.

Losing Stefon Diggs hurts, as does the likelihood that Tank Dell will miss the season due to a knee injury. Stroud has to get acclimated to new targets to make this offense click after a stagnant year under Slowik.

Mixon is a bruising runner with wiggle in the open field and sound hands. Acquiring him for a seventh-round pick was a steal. Fourth-round pick Woody Marks figures to be the third-down back and add a change of pace. Used infrequently, Dameon Pierce has power and some breakaway ability. Jakob Johnson is the new lead-blocking fullback.

## DEFENSE

Ryans is the architect of one of the NFL's top defenses and is known for his aggressive 4-3 schemes. He believes in getting after the quarterback and has assembled a formidable edge tandem in Danielle Hunter and Anderson. Hunter's Euro Step move is tough to stop. Anderson's overall game is maturing, and he has a relentless style. Sheldon Rankins is back to add leadership and inside quickness. Tim Settle Jr.'s size and strength set him apart. Mario Edwards Jr. is an underrated interior rusher. There's a lot of depth with Denico Autry, Derek Barnett and Darrell Taylor to keep the rotation fresh.

Azeez Al-Shaair is a rangy, hard-hitting middle linebacker whose presence was missed after his suspension for an illegal hit on Jacksonville quarterback Trevor Lawrence. There's competition for the other linebacker spot between Henry To'oTo'o, Christian Harris (who has durability issues) and newcomer E.J. Speed, who many believe will emerge as a starter.

Stingley has outstanding hands and is faster and tougher than most of his opponents. Gardner-Johnson has a nose for the ball and an intense, trash-talking personality. Nickel Jalen Pitre is on track to make it back from a torn pectoral. Like Stingley, he got a top-of-the-market contract extension. Kamari Lassiter loves to hit and roughs up receivers as the corner opposite Stingley. Calen Bullock, working next to Gardner-Johnson, gives the Texans one of the better safety duos in the NFL.

## SPECIALISTS

Coordinator Frank Ross has built a solid group, especially with Ka'imi Fairbairn, one of the most accurate long-distance placekickers in the NFL. Tommy Townsend has booming hangtime on his punts. Tucker Addington and undrafted free agent Austin Brinkman are competing to replace long-snapper Jon Weeks. There are good options in the return game, especially former All-Pro Braxton Berrios. Reserve corners D'Angelo Ross and Tremon Smith excel at kick coverage.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Texans have proven they're more than good enough to dominate the AFC South again and get back to the playoffs. Whether they're really talented enough to make some noise in the postseason remains to be seen. The defense is definitely good enough, but the offense needs to hold up its end of the bargain.

The Texans like the culture they've built and the chemistry between Ryans and general manager Nick Caserio, who has rebuilt the roster. "We trust Nick and we trust DeMeco to do what's best for the team," Cal McNair says. "We're confident in their ability to do what's best for the team and put a great product on the field. We can't wait to see it."

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Indianapolis | W | 29-27 |
| Sept. | 15 | Chicago | W | 19-13 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Minnesota | L | 7-34 |
| Sept. | 29 | Jacksonville | W | 24-20 |
| Oct. | 6 | Buffalo | W | 23-20 |
| Oct. | 13 | at New England | W | 41-21 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Green Bay | L | 22-24 |
| Oct. | 27 | Indianapolis | W | 23-20 |
| Oct. | 31 | at N.Y. Jets | L | 13-21 |
| Nov. | 10 | Detroit | L | 23-26 |
| Nov. | 18 | at Dallas | W | 34-10 |
| Nov. | 24 | Tennessee | L | 27-32 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Jacksonville | W | 23-20 |
| Dec. | 15 | Miami | W | 20-12 |
| Dec. | 21 | at Kansas City | L | 19-27 |
| Dec. | 25 | Baltimore | L | 2-31 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Tennessee | W | 23-14 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 11 | L.A. Chargers | W | 32-12 |
| Jan. | 18 | at Kansas City | L | 14-23 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 319.7 | 22 | 9 |
| Rushing | 112.3 | 15 | 6 |
| Passing | 207.4 | 21 | 10 |
| Scoring | 21.9 | 19 | 9 |
| Third Down % | 37.7 | T19 | T10 |
| Points/Play | 0.350 | 19 | 8 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 315.0 | 6 | 4 |
| Rushing | 114.0 | 11 | 6 |
| Passing | 201.0 | 6 | 3 |
| Scoring | 21.9 | 14 | 8 |
| Interceptions | 19 | 2 | 1 |
| Sacks | 49 | T4 | 3 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.353 | 10 | 6 |
| TO Differential | +10 | 7 | 4 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C.J. Stroud | 532 | 336 | 3,727 | 20 | 12 |
| Davis Mills | 36 | 20 | 212 | 0 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joe Mixon | 245 | 1,016 | 4.1 | 11 |
| Dameon Pierce | 40 | 293 | 7.3 | 2 |
| C.J. Stroud | 52 | 233 | 4.5 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nico Collins | 68 | 1,006 | 14.8 | 7 |
| Dalton Schultz | 53 | 532 | 10.0 | 2 |
| Tank Dell | 51 | 667 | 13.1 | 3 |
| Stefon Diggs | 47 | 496 | 10.6 | 3 |
| Joe Mixon | 36 | 309 | 8.6 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Ka'imi Fairbairn, 36-42 FGs, 34-36 PATs, 142 points

**TACKLES:** Henry To'oTo'o, 105; Eric Murray, 75

**SACKS:** Danielle Hunter, 12.0; Will Anderson Jr., 11.0

**INTERCEPTIONS:** Calen Bullock, 5; Derek Stingley Jr., 5

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**TRADER NICK** Nick Caserio is always open for business. Specifically, wheeling and dealing in the trade market, and especially during the NFL Draft, where he has executed 25 draft-day trades since being hired as general manager in 2021. He made seven this year, including a deal with the New York Giants to trade out of the first round. He set a franchise-record with eight trades in 2023, the year he drafted C.J. Stroud second overall and then maneuvered to select Will Anderson Jr. one pick later. This year, his biggest deals netted him second-round wide receiver Jayden Higgins and second-round offensive tackle **Aireontae Ersery.**

MATT KROHN-IMAGN IMAGES

**TOUGH TIMES** Ersery and his four siblings were raised in Kansas City, Missouri by a single mother: Takita Charles. She raised them in extremely difficult financial circumstances while working at fast food restaurants and warehouses. At one point, the family was homeless. Eventually, they moved on to transitional housing and then a two-bedroom apartment. "I've been through some (stuff), man," Ersery says. "But I take great pride in it." He didn't play football until his freshman year of high school, initially preferring basketball. "Like a lot of people, I had hoop dreams," Ersery says. "It all worked out." At Minnesota, he emerged as a third-team All-American and the Big Ten Offensive Lineman of the Year. "Tae is unbelievable," Golden Gophers line coach Brian Callahan says. "He has no ceiling on his potential."

**LIFE ON THE FARM** Growing up on a cattle farm in Ohio, tight end Cade Stover became accustomed to long days. He baled and cut hay, tended to the livestock and rose at the crack of dawn for chores. The farm produced corn, alfalfa and beef for the two butcher shops they own. "It built me," Stover says. "It built my pops. It built my whole family. I try to keep putting on for the blue-collar community."

# SCOUTING THE TEXANS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP HOUSTON

"Firing Bobby Slowik was a good start for fixing the offense. He had lost the confidence of the locker room and the staff by not making adjustments or listening to suggestions. … Trading Laremy Tunsil was a bold move by Nick Caserio, but not sure they've adequately replaced him with Cam Robinson. He wasn't that good in Jacksonville and was just passable in Minnesota. … Nico Collins is a true No. 1 receiver. … C.J. Stroud went backwards last season, but most of that you can blame on Slowik and the offensive line not protecting him. … Tank Dell is unlikely to play at all this season. He's had hard luck: broken leg, shot in the leg, then torn ACL, MCL, LCL and dislocated knee cap. … Christian Kirk fixes the slot position for Houston. … Jayden Higgins is just as tall and big as Collins. That's a matchup nightmare. … The Texans are hoping the overhauled line will get better with Cole Popovich in charge. … Won't be long before rookie Aireontae Ersery is starting somewhere on the line. … Dalton Schultz got paid, and then he got worse as a pass-catcher and blocker. … No better pass-rush tandem than Danielle Hunter and Will Anderson Jr. … Azeez Al-Shaair could be a marked man after that tackle on Trevor Lawrence. That can't happen again. He's too good to not have on the field. … No one better at tracking the football and catching it than Derek Stingley Jr. … C.J. Gardner-Johnson is a feisty playmaker with an alpha personality. … Find me a better secondary than Stingley, Gardner-Johnson, Kamari Lassiter and Jalen Pitre. I'll wait."

# 2025 TEXANS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Mills, Davis | QB | 6-4 | 225 | 4 | Stanford | D3a-21 | D3a-Hou-21 |
| 16 | Slovis, Kedon | QB | 6-2 | 223 | 1 | BYU | FA-24 | FA-Ind-24 |
| 7 | Stroud, C.J. | QB | 6-3 | 218 | 2 | Ohio State | D1a-23 | D1a-Hou-23 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | Brooks, British | RB | 5-11 | 225 | 1 | North Carolina | FA-24 | FA-Hou-24 |
| | Johnson, Jakob | FB | 6-3 | 255 | 6 | Tennessee | FA-25 | FA-NE-19 |
| 22 | Jordan, Jawhar | RB | 5-10 | 185 | 1 | Louisville | D6-24 | D6-Hou-24 |
| 28 | Mixon, Joe | RB | 6-1 | 220 | 8 | Oklahoma | T-Cin-24 | D2-Cin-17 |
| 33 | Ogunbowale, Dare | RB | 5-10 | 205 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-Jac-22 | FA-Hou-17 |
| 31 | Pierce, Dameon | RB | 5-10 | 215 | 3 | Florida | D4a-22 | D4a-Hou-22 |
| 26 | Taylor, J.J. | RB | 5-6 | 185 | 3 | Arizona | FA-23 | FA-NE-20 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Berrios, Braxton | WR | 5-9 | 185 | 7 | Miami | FA-Mia-25 | D6b-NE-18 |
| 12 | Collins, Nico | WR | 6-4 | 222 | 4 | Michigan | D3b-21 | D3b-Hou-21 |
| 3 | Dell, Tank | WR | 5-10 | 165 | 2 | Houston | D3-23 | D3-Hou-23 |
| 19 | Hutchinson, Xavier | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 2 | Iowa State | D6b-23 | D6b-Hou-23 |
| 88 | Johnson III, Johnny | WR | 6-1 | 199 | 1 | Oregon | FA-22 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 89 | Johnson, Xavier | WR | 6-1 | 210 | 1 | Ohio State | FA-24 | FA-Buf-24 |
| 9 | Jordan, Brevin | TE | 6-3 | 245 | 4 | Miami | D5a-21 | D5a-Hou-21 |
| | Kirk, Christian | WR | 5-11 | 200 | 7 | Texas A&M | T-Jac-25 | D2-Ari-18 |
| 8 | Metchie III, John | WR | 6-0 | 195 | 2 | Alabama | D2b-22 | D2b-Hou-22 |
| 86 | Schultz, Dalton | TE | 6-5 | 242 | 7 | Stanford | FA-Dal-23 | D4b-Dal-18 |
| 83 | Smith Jr., Irv | TE | 6-2 | 240 | 5 | Alabama | FA-24 | D2-Min-19 |
| 87 | Stover, Cade | TE | 6-4 | 251 | 1 | Ohio State | D4-24 | D4-Hou-24 |
| | Watson, Justin | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 7 | Penn | FA-KC-25 | D5-TB-18 |
| 14 | Wayne, Jared | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 1 | Pittsburgh | FA-24 | FA-Hou-23 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Andrews, Jake | OL | 6-3 | 308 | 2 | Troy | W-NE-25 | D4a-NE-23 |
| | Brown, Trent | T | 6-8 | 380 | 10 | Florida | FA-Cin-25 | D7a-SF-15 |
| | Carvin, Jerome | OL | 6-5 | 307 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-25 | FA-KC-23 |
| 75 | Deculus, Austin | T | 6-5 | 321 | 2 | LSU | FA-24 | D6-Hou-22 |
| 57 | Fisher, Blake | T | 6-6 | 312 | 1 | Notre Dame | D2-24 | D2-Hou-24 |
| 77 | Henderson, LaDarius | G | 6-4 | 309 | 1 | Michigan | D7-24 | D7-Hou-24 |
| 71 | Howard, Tytus | T | 6-5 | 322 | 6 | Alabama State | D1-19 | D1-Hou-19 |
| | Ingram, Ed | G | 6-3 | 307 | 3 | LSU | T-Min-25 | D2b-Min-22 |
| 54 | Patterson, Jarrett | C/G | 6-4 | 310 | 2 | Notre Dame | D6a-23 | D6a-Hou-23 |
| | Robinson, Cam | T | 6-6 | 335 | 8 | Alabama | FA-Min-25 | D2-Jac-17 |
| 70 | Scruggs, Juice | C/G | 6-3 | 310 | 2 | Penn State | D2-23 | D2-Hou-23 |
| 72 | Thomas, Jaylon | T | 6-5 | 311 | 1 | SMU | FA-23 | FA-Bal-23 |
| 74 | Thomas, Zach | T | 6-5 | 305 | 3 | San Diego State | W-NE-24 | D6-Chi-22 |
| | Tomlinson, Laken | G | 6-3 | 323 | 10 | Duke | FA-Sea-25 | D1-Det-15 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51 | Anderson Jr., Will | DE | 6-4 | 243 | 2 | Alabama | D1b-23 | D1b-Hou-23 |
| 96 | Autry, Denico | DT | 6-5 | 285 | 11 | Mississippi State | FA-Ten-24 | FA-LV-14 |
| 95 | Barnett, Derek | DE | 6-3 | 259 | 7 | Tennessee | W-Phi-23 | D1-Phi-17 |
| 50 | Byrd, Solomon | DE | 6-3 | 250 | 1 | USC | D7-24 | D7-Hou-24 |
| 97 | Edwards Jr., Mario | DT | 6-3 | 280 | 9 | Florida State | FA-Sea-24 | D2-LV-15 |
| 91 | Fatukasi, Folorunso | DT | 6-4 | 318 | 6 | Connecticut | FA-Jac-24 | D6b-NYJ-18 |
| 93 | Hinish, Kurt | DT | 6-1 | 296 | 3 | Notre Dame | FA-22 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 92 | Horton, Dylan | DE | 6-4 | 275 | 2 | TCU | D4-23 | D4-Hou-23 |
| 55 | Hunter, Danielle | DE | 6-5 | 263 | 9 | LSU | FA-Min-24 | D3-Min-15 |
| | Jonathan, Kingsley | DE | 6-4 | 260 | 3 | Syracuse | FA-25 | FA-Buf-22 |
| 94 | Peevy, Jayden | DT | 6-5 | 308 | 1 | Texas A&M | FA-24 | FA-Ten-22 |
| | Rankins, Sheldon | DT | 6-2 | 305 | 9 | Louisville | FA-Cin-25 | D1-NO-16 |
| 98 | Settle Jr., Tim | DT | 6-3 | 313 | 7 | Virginia Tech | FA-24 | D5-Was-18 |
| | Taylor, Darrell | DE | 6-4 | 255 | 5 | Tennessee | FA-Chi-25 | D2-Sea-20 |
| 72 | Togiai, Tommy | DT | 6-2 | 296 | 3 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D4-Cle-21 |
| | Toohill, Casey | DE | 6-5 | 250 | 5 | Stanford | FA-Buf-25 | D7-Phi-20 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Al-Shaair, Azeez | LB | 6-2 | 228 | 6 | Florida Atlantic | FA-Ten-24 | FA-SF-19 |
| 35 | Hansen, Jake | LB | 6-1 | 230 | 3 | Illinois | FA-22 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 48 | Harris, Christian | LB | 6-2 | 232 | 3 | Alabama | D3-22 | D3-Hou-22 |
| 56 | Hill, Jamal | LB | 6-0 | 227 | 1 | Oregon | D6-24 | D6-Hou-24 |
| | Niemann, Nick | LB | 6-3 | 234 | 4 | Iowa | FA-LAC-25 | D6a-LAC-21 |
| | Speed, E.J. | LB | 6-4 | 227 | 6 | Tarleton State | FA-Ind-25 | D5-Ind-19 |
| 39 | To'oTo'o, Henry | LB | 6-2 | 228 | 2 | Alabama | D5-23 | D5-Hou-23 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Bullock, Calen | S | 6-3 | 190 | 1 | USC | D3-24 | D3-Hou-24 |
| | Darby, Ronald | CB | 5-11 | 193 | 10 | Florida State | FA-Jac-25 | D2-Buf-15 |
| | Gardner-Johnson, C.J. | S | 5-11 | 208 | 6 | Florida | T-Phi-25 | D4-NO-19 |
| 41 | Junior, Gregory | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 3 | Ouachita Baptist | FA-24 | D6-Jac-22 |
| 4 | Lassiter, Kamari | CB | 6-0 | 180 | 1 | Georgia | D2-24 | D2-Hou-24 |
| 5 | Pitre, Jalen | S | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | Baylor | D2a-22 | D2a-Hou-22 |
| 37 | Ross, D'Angelo | CB | 5-9 | 190 | 3 | New Mexico | FA-22 | FA-NE-19 |
| | Smith, Tremon | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 7 | Central Arkansas | FA-Den-25 | D6-KC-18 |
| 29 | Stewart, M.J. | S | 5-11 | 205 | 7 | North Carolina | FA-Cle-22 | D2b-TB-18 |
| 24 | Stingley Jr., Derek | CB | 6-1 | 195 | 3 | LSU | D1a-22 | D1a-Hou-22 |
| 20 | Ward, Jimmie | S | 5-11 | 193 | 11 | Northern Illinois | FA-SF-23 | D1-SF-14 |
| 25 | Yeast, Russ | S | 5-10 | 195 | 3 | Kansas State | FA-24 | D7-LAR-22 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Addington, Tucker | LS | 6-2 | 230 | 2 | Sam Houston | FA-25 | FA-Dal-22 |
| 15 | Fairbairn, Ka'imi | K | 6-0 | 183 | 8 | UCLA | FA-16 | FA-Hou-16 |
| 6 | Townsend, Tommy | P | 6-1 | 191 | 5 | Florida | FA-KC-24 | FA-KC-20 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 12 | Nico Collins | | Jaylin Noel (R) |
| WR | | Christian Kirk | | Justin Watson |
| WR | | Jayden Higgins (R) | 19 | Xavier Hutchinson |
| LT | | Cam Robinson | | Aireontae Ersery (R) |
| LG | 71 | Tytus Howard | | Laken Tomlinson |
| C | 54 | Jarrett Patterson | | Jake Andrews |
| RG | 70 | Juice Scruggs | | Ed Ingram |
| RT | 57 | Blake Fisher | | Trent Brown |
| TE | 86 | Dalton Schultz | 87 | Cade Stover |
| QB | 7 | C.J. Stroud | 10 | Davis Mills |
| RB | 28 | Joe Mixon | | Woody Marks (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 55 | Danielle Hunter | 95 | Derek Barnett |
| DT | 98 | Tim Settle Jr. | 97 | Mario Edwards Jr. |
| DT | | Sheldon Rankins | 96 | Denico Autry |
| DE | 51 | Will Anderson Jr. | | Darrell Taylor |
| LB | 0 | Azeez Al-Shaair | | E.J. Speed |
| LB | 39 | Henry To'oTo'o | 48 | Christian Harris |
| CB | 24 | Derek Stingley Jr. | | Ronald Darby |
| CB | 4 | Kamari Lassiter | | Jaylin Smith (R) |
| NB | 5 | Jalen Pitre | | Tremon Smith |
| SS | | C.J. Gardner-Johnson | 29 | M.J. Stewart |
| FS | 21 | Calen Bullock | 20 | Jimmie Ward |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 15 | Ka'imi Fairbairn | KR | 31 | Dameon Pierce |
| P | 6 | Tommy Townsend | PR | | Braxton Berrios |

**39.9%**

On targets into his coverage, rookie safety Calen Bullock allowed just a 39.3% catch rate, the lowest of any player who defended more than 20 targets, per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## TEXANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Jayden Higgins | WR | 6-4 | 211 | Iowa State |
| 2 | Aireontae Ersery | OT | 6-6 | 331 | Minnesota |
| 3 | Jaylin Noel | WR | 5-11 | 200 | Iowa State |
| 3 | Jaylin Smith | CB | 5-10 | 187 | USC |
| 4 | Woody Marks | RB | 5-10 | 208 | USC |
| 6 | Jaylen Reed | S | 6-0 | 211 | Penn State |
| 6 | Graham Mertz | QB | 6-3 | 212 | Florida |
| 7 | Kyonte Hamilton | DT | 6-4 | 304 | Rutgers |
| 7 | Luke Lachey | TE | 6-6 | 251 | Iowa |

After trading out of the first round when they were unable to move up for offensive linemen Kelvin Banks Jr. or Tyler Booker, the Texans addressed a different need: wide receiver. Jayden Higgins is a big, fast downfield target in the Nico Collins mold. Aireontae Ersery is a road-grader who plays a bit high because he's nearly 6-foot-7, but he should be C.J. Stroud's long-term blindside protector. Jaylin Noel has speed, leaping ability, moves and the return skills to make a fast impact. Jaylin Smith figures to be heavily involved in kick coverage; he has the versatility to play outside corner or nickel and has a nose for the football. Woody Marks' pass-catching skill has third-down back written all over it. Jaylen Reed is a natural center fielder who loves contact.

# IND COLTS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST
2

Another playoff absence after a December fade has Colts fans understandably pessimistic about the team's prospects. The Colts haven't made the playoffs since the 2020 season, and their last postseason victory came in the 2018 season.

That general manager Chris Ballard has survived the disappointing stretch is a surprise, considering owner Jim Irsay's high expectations for the franchise. Ballard spent money to add quality free agents, especially in the secondary, an area of constant scrutiny for several years.

Anything short of a playoff berth should spell the end of Ballard's tenure, but that's been said repeatedly in recent years. Can quarterback Anthony Richardson Sr. deliver on his potential to revamp an offense that's too reliant on running back Jonathan Taylor? And can a defense that failed to get key stops in crucial games rebound to give the Colts a legitimate shot at the playoffs? It's fair to say several jobs should be riding on this season.

## OFFENSE

Richardson was benched at one point in his second season after not satisfying expectations for how to prepare as a franchise quarterback. That's not exactly encouraging, although Richardson's arm strength and running ability provide hope that if he can improve his passing efficiency, the offense will be better. Veteran passer Daniel Jones will push him, but to be honest, the Colts expect Richardson to be their guy. The No. 4 overall draft pick in 2023 has to deliver stronger numbers than a career 50.6% completion rate and 11 passing touchdowns versus 13 interceptions. He does have 10 rushing scores to his credit.

Taylor, the 2021 rushing champion, returns after his second Pro Bowl nod and will be the key component in taking pressure off Richardson. The sixth-year pro ran for 1,431 yards last season, the second-highest total of his career, with 11 TDs. The Colts had to tinker on the offensive line after losing two starters, which means second-year pros Tanor Bortolini and Matt Goncalves must be solid at center and right guard, respectively. The Colts are hoping right tackle Braden Smith can return to elite form after missing the last five games for mental health reasons. The Colts drafted right tackle Jalen Travis in the fourth round as a contingency if Smith is unable to play consistently.

Rookie tight end Tyler Warren provides the passing game with a valuable weapon who can stretch the field and make an immediate impact. Colts wide receivers have often struggled to provide enough production, so Warren could be vital to giving pass-catchers more opportunities and getting his share of targets to make plays. No. 1 wide receiver Michael Pittman Jr. returns after being slowed by a back injury that didn't require surgery. Slot receiver Josh Downs missed three games due to ankle and shoulder injuries but had better numbers in his second season and should be a focal point. Alec Pierce emerged as a deep threat with a penchant for winning one-on-one battles. The 2022 second-round pick had just 37 catches, but he averaged 22.3 yards per reception.

## DEFENSE

New coordinator Lou Anarumo takes over for Gus Bradley with an emphasis on aggressiveness. The Colts ranked 24th in scoring defense at 25.1 points per game and 29th in total defense at 361.2 yards per game. The pass rush was non-existent in key games, which exposed an often-overwhelmed secondary.

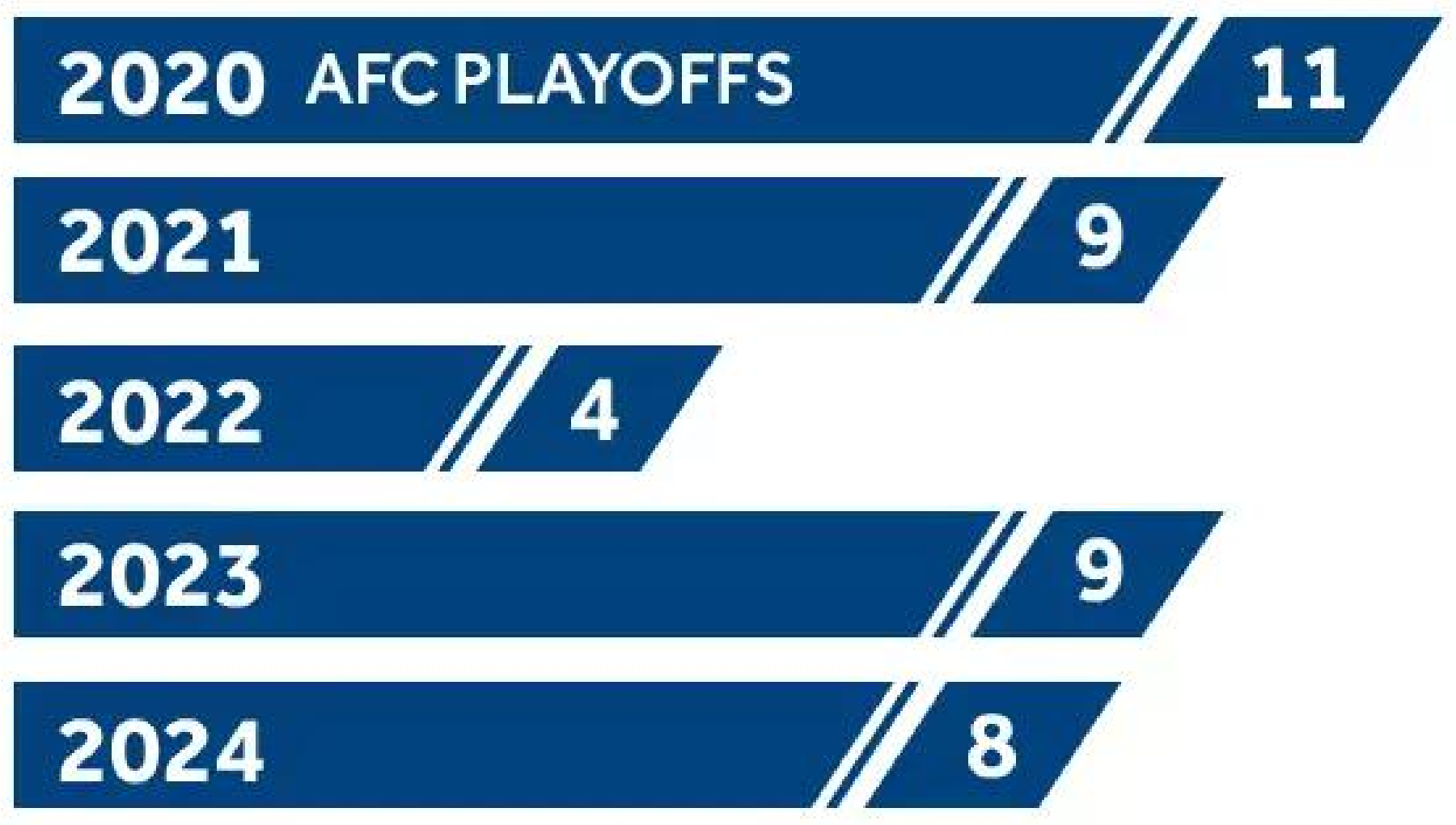
That secondary received some big upgrades, though, including cornerback

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Miami | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Denver | 4:05 |
| Sept 21 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at L.A. Rams | 4:05 |
| Oct. 5 | Las Vegas | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | Arizona | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | at L.A. Chargers | 4:05 |
| Oct. 26 | Tennessee | 4:25 |
| Nov. 2 | at Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | Atlanta (Berlin) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Nov. 16 | BYE | |
| Nov. 23 | at Kansas City | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | Houston | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Seattle | 4:25 |
| Dec. 22 | San Francisco | 8:15 |
| Dec. 28 | Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Houston | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Shane Steichen
**Record With Team:** 17-17
**Career Record:** 17-17
**Offensive Coordinator:** Jim Bob Cooter
**Defensive Coordinator:** Lou Anarumo
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Brian Mason
**Quarterbacks:** Cam Turner
**Running Backs:** DeAndre Smith
**Wide Receivers:** Reggie Wayne
**Tight Ends:** Tom Manning
**Offensive Line:** Tony Sparano Jr.
**Defensive Line:** Charlie Partridge
**Linebackers:** James Bettcher
**Defensive Backs:** Jerome Henderson
**Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary:** Chris Hewitt

**ZAIRE FRANKLIN**
LINEBACKER

Charvarius Ward, who signed a three-year, $54-million contract with $35 million guaranteed to provide the secondary with its best cover man in several seasons. Fellow corners Corey Ballentine and rookie Justin Walley are expected to boost the back line as well. Another key addition: safety Cam Bynum, who signed a four-year, $60 million deal with half of it guaranteed.

The Colts have talent on a defensive line anchored by DeForest Buckner and Grover Stewart, but the pass-rush performance must produce higher numbers than 36 sacks, which tied for 25th. Buckner (6.5 sacks) draws the most double-teams and can't be a one-man pass rush. Samson Ebukam missed last season with a torn Achilles after posting a career-best 9.5 sacks in 2023. How quickly he can return to form will be key, but the Colts picked up the option on edge rusher Kwity Paye, a 2021 first-round pick with 26.5 sacks in four seasons. There are also capable youngsters on hand in second-year edge rusher Laiatu Latu and end JT Tuimoloau, a 2025 second-round pick. They should get their share of pass-rush snaps, especially if Ebukam needs time to build stamina.

Linebacker Zaire Franklin has 352 tackles with five sacks, seven forced fumbles and two interceptions across the past two seasons. Again, the Colts need more than one linebacker to make game-changing plays.

The Colts tied for fifth in the league with 16 interceptions, which suggests the secondary wasn't bereft of talent. But this is also a unit that ranked 26th in passing yards allowed per game — hence Ballard's spending on Ward, Ballentine and Bynum. It's easy to say that defense starts up front, but if Anarumo's scheme is to succeed, both areas have to make more key plays and get off the field.

## SPECIALISTS

The release of placekicker Matt Gay raised eyebrows, considering he was the NFL's highest-paid player at his position when he joined the Colts in 2023, but he made just 82% of his kicks across two seasons. The Colts took a $4 million dead cap hit and opted to go with second-year pro Spencer Shrader, who made all five of his field goals and nine extra points last season as a rookie with the New York Jets and Kansas City Chiefs. Admittedly, it's a small sample size for an important position, but money not spent on an ineffective kicker could be put to use elsewhere. Punter Rigoberto Sanchez has been a model of consistency in eight seasons and has a strong leg for kickoffs. One-time Pro Bowl long-snapper Luke Rhodes became the highest-paid player at his position in 2023 and continues to excel. Second-year wide receiver Anthony Gould had just 17 total returns as a rookie, but he has the speed to make an impact on kickoff and punt returns.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Richardson is only 23 entering his third season, so optimists see room for the kind of growth the Colts need. But the clock is ticking. It's doubtful the Colts have enough pieces to make the playoffs if they don't get quality quarterback play, which means not missing on the routine sideline throws or making poor choices when it's imperative to move the chains.

The Colts have gone 17-17 during the Richardson era, so there's reason to be wary about whether this team can finally break through and make some noise in January. The time for giving the benefit of the doubt to Ballard, Richardson and the Colts has passed. If 2025 doesn't provide the desired results, expect some sweeping changes in the front office and at the most important position. Irsay has been more patient than in the past because the prospect of an overhaul seemed daunting. But the results speak for themselves. No more excuses.

CHRISTINE TANNOUS/INDYSTAR

## 2024 RESULTS (8-9)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Houston | L | 27-29 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Green Bay | L | 10-16 |
| Sept. | 22 | Chicago | W | 21-16 |
| Sept | 29 | Pittsburgh | W | 27-24 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Jacksonville | L | 34-37 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Tennessee | W | 20-17 |
| Oct. | 20 | Miami | W | 16-10 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Houston | L | 20-23 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Minnesota | L | 13-21 |
| Nov. | 10 | Buffalo | L | 20-30 |
| Nov. | 17 | at N.Y. Jets | W | 28-27 |
| Nov. | 24 | Detroit | L | 6-24 |
| Dec. | 1 | at New England | W | 25-24 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Denver | L | 13-31 |
| Dec. | 22 | Tennessee | W | 38-30 |
| Dec. | 29 | at N.Y. Giants | L | 33-45 |
| Jan. | 5 | Jacksonville (ot) | W | 26-23 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 334.8 | 13 | 4 |
| Rushing | 137.1 | 8 | 2 |
| Passing | 197.7 | 25 | 13 |
| Scoring | 22.2 | 17 | 8 |
| Third Down % | 37.9 | 18 | 9 |
| Points/Play | 0.362 | 16 | 7 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 361.2 | 29 | 15 |
| Rushing | 131.8 | 24 | 14 |
| Passing | 229.4 | 26 | 14 |
| Scoring | 25.1 | 24 | 11 |
| Interceptions | 16 | T5 | T3 |
| Sacks | 36 | T25 | T12 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.384 | 20 | 10 |
| TO Differential | -4 | 19 | 10 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anthony Richardson Sr. | 264 | 126 | 1,814 | 8 | 12 |
| Joe Flacco | 248 | 162 | 1,761 | 12 | 7 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jonathan Taylor | 303 | 1,431 | 4.7 | 11 |
| Anthony Richardson | 86 | 499 | 5.8 | 6 |
| Trey Sermon | 56 | 159 | 2.8 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Josh Downs | 72 | 803 | 11.1 | 5 |
| Michael Pittman Jr. | 69 | 808 | 11.7 | 3 |
| Alec Pierce | 37 | 824 | 22.3 | 7 |
| Adonai Mitchell | 23 | 312 | 13.6 | 0 |
| Jonathan Taylor | 18 | 136 | 7.6 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Matt Gay, 31-37 FGs, 33-33 PATs, 126 points
**TACKLES:** Zaire Franklin, 173; Nick Cross, 146
**SACKS:** Kwity Paye, 8.0; DeForest Buckner, 6.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Julian Blackmon, 3; Nick Cross, 3; Kenny Moore II, 3

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**WELCOME TO INDY** Tight end **Tyler Warren** received an enthusiastic greeting from the Colts while touring the facility for the first time, as 2024 Ring of Honor tight end Dallas Clark made a video call to welcome the rookie to town. "You struck gold, brother," Clark said. "You are in the best organization, the best owner in Mr. Irsay, the girls (Irsay's daughters), they are unbelievable, the city, the fans. It's time to go to work, man." "I'm fired up," Warren said. "I'm excited to be here, man. This is where I wanted to be."

**REMEMBERING CORAL** The tragic April death of Coral Terpening, 45-year-old wife of Matt, the Colts director of college scouting, rocked the organization and galvanized a supportive league. Throughout draft weekend, NFL teams wore coral-colored T-shirts with the message, "Your light lives on in all of us" above "CCT." Coral died in an accident while attending a Louisville volleyball tournament with her girls. She was also highlighted on NFL Network. "It's our way of giving 'Terp' a hug," draft analyst Daniel Jeremiah said.

**TOO MUCH NOISE** Former longtime New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick couldn't resist taking a jab at the Colts on Monday Night Football's ManningCast for what he claimed was artificial crowd noise at the old RCA Dome during the Peyton Manning era. Colts owner Jim Irsay didn't hesitate to respond when he wrote, "Reminder … piped-in crowd noise myth — 1000 percent fictional. The skip was TV broadcast. We get it, though … visiting teams couldn't believe that 60,000 in an intimate domed stadium could make that much deafening noise!"

**ADDING SOME ICE** Pro Bowl linebacker Zaire Franklin opened a new Rita's Italian ice in the suburb of McCordsville, providing a taste of his Philadelphia hometown. Grand opening attendees received free ice. "Being able to give back and help create opportunities is special," Franklin said.

# SCOUTING THE COLTS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP INDIANAPOLIS

"An old-fashioned quarterback competition is afoot in Indy. It's hard to see Anthony Richardson putting it all together. He's an amazing athlete, but his accuracy and decision-making are so below par. Maybe the light clicks on. If it doesn't, Daniel Jones can keep the ship sailing for a team that is a cut below the Texans in the division. … Few teams have the kind of receiving tandem the Colts have with Michael Pittman Jr. and Alec Pierce. … Quenton Nelson hasn't been quite as dominant as his first two seasons in the NFL, but he's still darn good. … The Indy fans are going to really like Tyler Warren. That was a wise move by Chris Ballard. Hard to see him missing on a tight end. … Jonathan Taylor has the kind of body lean, power and moves to be in the Pro Bowl every year. … Braden Smith is an example of how critical mental health is because teams are much more sensitive and aware now about these things. He showed real courage. … Jalen Travis is going to play in this league for a very long time. … Laiatu Latu was underwhelming as a rookie. … DeForest Buckner is rarely blocked. When he is, he doesn't stay blocked. … Zaire Franklin has that old-school linebacker mentality. … I think they're going to miss E.J. Speed. … Quarterbacks should avoid throwing in Kenny Moore II's direction. … Nick Cross flies under the radar, but he's one of the best young safeties in the league. … Charvarius Ward gives the Colts a chance to match up with the big-time wide receivers in this division."

CLARK WADE/INDYSTAR

# 2025 COLTS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12 Bean, Jason | QB | 6-2 | 196 | 1 | Kansas | FA-24 | FA-Ind-24 |
| 17 Jones, Daniel | QB | 6-5 | 230 | 6 | Duke | FA-Min-25 | D1-NYG-19 |
| 5 Richardson Sr., Anthony | QB | 6-4 | 244 | 2 | Florida | D1-23 | D1-Ind-23 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36 Ahmed, Salvon | RB | 5-11 | 197 | 5 | Washington | FA-24 | FA-SF-20 |
| 31 Goodson, Tyler | RB | 5-9 | 197 | 2 | Iowa | FA-23 | FA-GB-22 |
| 26 Herbert, Khalil | RB | 5-9 | 212 | 4 | Virginia Tech | FA-Cin-25 | D6a-Chi-21 |
| 28 Taylor, Jonathan | RB | 5-10 | 226 | 5 | Wisconsin | D2b-20 | D2b-Ind-20 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Ajou, Ajou | WR | 6-3 | 218 | 1 | Garden City (KS) CC | FA-25 | FA-Ind-25 |
| 81 Alie-Cox, Mo | TE | 6-5 | 267 | 7 | VCU | FA-17 | FA-Ind-17 |
| 1 Downs, Josh | WR | 5-9 | 171 | 2 | North Carolina | D3-23 | D3-Ind-23 |
| 16 Dulin, Ashton | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 6 | Malone | FA-19 | FA-Ind-19 |
| 6 Gould, Anthony | WR | 5-8 | 174 | 1 | Oregon State | D5a-24 | D5a-Ind-24 |
| 86 Mallory, Will | TE | 6-4 | 239 | 2 | Miami (Fla.) | D5c-23 | D5c-Ind-23 |
| 49 McKeon, Sean | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 5 | Michigan | FA-24 | FA-Dal-20 |
| 10 Mitchell, Adonai | WR | 6-2 | 205 | 1 | Texas | D2-24 | D2-Ind-24 |
| 2 Montgomery, D.J. | WR | 6-1 | 201 | 3 | Austin Peay | FA-23 | FA-Cle-19 |
| 85 Ogletree, Drew | TE | 6-5 | 260 | 3 | Youngstown State | D6-22 | D6-Ind-22 |
| 84 Okwuegbunam Jr., A. | TE | 6-5 | 258 | 5 | Missouri | FA-24 | D4-Den-20 |
| 14 Pierce, Alec | WR | 6-3 | 211 | 3 | Cincinnati | D2-22 | D2-Ind-22 |
| 11 Pittman Jr., Michael | WR | 6-4 | 223 | 5 | USC | D2a-20 | D2a-Ind-20 |
| 17 Treadwell, Laquon | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 9 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | D1-Min-16 |
| 80 Woods, Jelani | TE | 6-7 | 253 | 3 | Virginia | D3a-22 | D3a-Ind-22 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 60 Bortolini, Tanor | G | 6-4 | 303 | 1 | Wisconsin | D4-24 | D4-Ind-24 |
| 73 Freeland, Blake | T | 6-7 | 302 | 2 | BYU | D4a-23 | D4a-Ind-23 |
| 62 French, Wesley | C | 6-4 | 307 | 4 | Western Michigan | FA-22 | FA-Ind-22 |
| 71 Goncalves, Matt | T | 6-6 | 317 | 1 | Pitt | D3-24 | D3-Ind-24 |
| 56 Nelson, Quenton | G | 6-5 | 330 | 7 | Notre Dame | D1-18 | D1-Ind-18 |
| 63 Pinter, Danny | C | 6-4 | 301 | 5 | Ball State | D5-20 | D5-Ind-20 |
| 79 Raimann, Bernhard | T | 6-6 | 303 | 3 | Central Michigan | D3b-22 | D3b-Ind-22 |
| 66 Sills, Josh | G | 6-6 | 325 | 3 | Oklahoma State | W-Phi-23 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 72 Smith, Braden | T | 6-6 | 312 | 7 | Auburn | D2b-18 | D2b-Ind-18 |
| 67 Tenuta, Luke | T | 6-8 | 314 | 2 | Virginia Tech | FA-25 | D6-Buf-22 |
| 68 Tucker, Dalton | G | 6-6 | 307 | 1 | Marshall | FA-24 | FA-Ind-24 |
| 76 Wilson, Jack | T | 6-11 | 310 | 1 | Minnesota | FA-25 | FA-Ind-24 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95 Adebawore, Adetomiwa | DT | 6-2 | 282 | 2 | Northwestern | D4b-23 | D4b-Ind-23 |
| 99 Buckner, DeForest | DT | 6-7 | 295 | 9 | Oregon | T-SF-20 | D1a-SF-16 |
| 52 Ebukam, Samson | DE | 6-3 | 245 | 8 | Eastern Washington | FA-SF-23 | D4b-LAR-17 |
| 92 Gallimore, Neville | DT | 6-2 | 307 | 5 | Oklahoma | FA-LAR-25 | D3-Dal-20 |
| 55 Land, Isaiah | DE | 6-4 | 235 | 2 | Florida A&M | W-Dal-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 97 Latu, Laiatu | DE | 6-5 | 265 | 1 | UCLA | D1-24 | D1-Ind-24 |
| 94 Lewis, Tyquan | DE | 6-3 | 267 | 7 | Ohio State | D2-18 | D2-Ind-18 |
| 74 Nchami, Durell | DE | 6-4 | 258 | 1 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 51 Paye, Kwity | DE | 6-3 | 265 | 4 | Michigan | D1-21 | D1-Ind-21 |
| 90 Stewart, Grover | DT | 6-4 | 314 | 8 | Albany State | D4-17 | D4-Ind-17 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 58 Ajiake, Austin | LB | 6-1 | 223 | 1 | UNLV | FA-23 | FA-Den-23 |
| 47 Anderson, Liam | LB | 6-3 | 226 | 1 | Holy Cross | FA-23 | FA-Ind-23 |
| 48 Bachie, Joe | LB | 6-2 | 235 | 5 | Michigan State | FA-Cin-25 | FA-NO-20 |
| 57 Carlies, Jaylon | LB | 6-3 | 227 | 1 | Missouri | D5b-24 | D5b-Ind-24 |
| 44 Franklin, Zaire | LB | 6-0 | 235 | 7 | Syracuse | D7-18 | D7-Ind-18 |
| 59 McGrone, Cameron | LB | 6-1 | 236 | 2 | Michigan | FA-22 | D5-NE-21 |
| 50 Olubi, Segun | LB | 6-0 | 225 | 2 | San Diego State | FA-22 | FA-SF-22 |
| 53 Phillips, Jacob | LB | 6-3 | 228 | 4 | LSU | FA-25 | D3b-Cle-20 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 Ballentine, Corey | CB | 5-11 | 196 | 6 | Washburn | FA-GB-25 | D6-NYG-19 |
| 29 Brents, JuJu | CB | 6-3 | 198 | 2 | Kansas State | D2-23 | D2-Ind-23 |
| 0 Bynum, Cam | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | California | FA-Min-25 | D4b-Min-21 |
| 20 Cross, Nick | S | 6-0 | 212 | 3 | Maryland | D3c-22 | D3c-Ind-22 |
| 42 Dabo, Marcel | S | 6-0 | 208 | 1 | Stuttgart | FA-22 | FA-Ind-22 |
| 37 Flowers, Tre | CB | 6-3 | 200 | 7 | Oklahoma State | FA-24 | D5b-Sea-18 |
| 39 Johnson, Alex | CB | 6-0 | 185 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 40 Jones, Jaylon | CB | 6-2 | 203 | 2 | Texas A&M | D7-23 | D7-Ind-23 |
| 34 Long Jr., David | CB | 5-11 | 196 | 6 | Michigan | FA-24 | D3-LAR-19 |
| 23 Moore II, Kenny | CB | 5-9 | 190 | 8 | Valdosta State | W-NE-17 | FA-NE-17 |
| 37 Scott, Daniel | S | 6-1 | 208 | 2 | Cal | D5b-23 | D5b-Ind-23 |
| 25 Thomas II, Rodney | S | 6-1 | 196 | 3 | Yale | D7-22 | D7-Ind-22 |
| 7 Ward, Charvarius | CB | 6-1 | 196 | 7 | Middle Tennessee | FA-SF-25 | FA-Dal-18 |
| 33 Womack III, Samuel | CB | 5-10 | 189 | 3 | Toledo | W-SF-24 | D5-SF-22 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 Rhodes, Luke | LS | 6-2 | 238 | 9 | William & Mary | FA-16 | FA-TB-16 |
| 8 Sanchez, Rigoberto | P | 6-0 | 195 | 8 | Hawai'i | FA-17 | FA-Ind-17 |
| 3 Shrader, Spencer | K | 6-2 | 201 | 1 | Notre Dame | FA-KC-25 | FA-Ind-24 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 14 | Alec Pierce | 10 | Adonai Mitchell |
| WR | 11 | Michael Pittman Jr. | 16 | Ashton Dulin |
| WR | 1 | Josh Downs | 6 | Anthony Gould |
| LT | 79 | Bernhard Raimann | 73 | Blake Freeland |
| LG | 56 | Quenton Nelson | 63 | Danny Pinter |
| C | 60 | Tanor Bortolini | 62 | Wesley French |
| RG | 71 | Matt Goncalves | 68 | Dalton Tucker |
| RT | 72 | Braden Smith | 75 | Jalen Travis (R) |
| TE | 84 | Tyler Warren (R) | 80 | Jelani Woods |
| QB | 5 | Anthony Richardson Sr. | 17 | Daniel Jones |
| RB | 28 | Jonathan Taylor | 26 | Khalil Herbert |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 51 | Kwity Paye | 97 | Laiatu Latu |
| DT | 90 | Grover Stewart | 95 | Adetomiwa Adebawore |
| DT | 99 | DeForest Buckner | 92 | Neville Gallimore |
| DE | 52 | Samson Ebukam | 91 | JT Tuimoloau (R) |
| MLB | 44 | Zaire Franklin | 50 | Segun Olubi |
| WLB | 57 | Jaylon Carlies | 59 | Cameron McGrone |
| CB | 29 | JuJu Brents | 40 | Jaylon Jones |
| CB | 7 | Charvarius Ward | 27 | Justin Walley (R) |
| NB | 23 | Kenny Moore II | 38 | Corey Ballentine |
| SS | 20 | Nick Cross | 37 | Daniel Scott |
| FS | 0 | Cam Bynum | 25 | Rodney Thomas II |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 3 | Spencer Shrader | KR | 6 | Anthony Gould |
| P | 8 | Rigoberto Sanchez | PR | 6 | Anthony Gould |

**-11.3%**

Anthony Richardson's completion percentage over expected of minus-11.3% was the lowest among all qualified starters per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## COLTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tyler Warren | TE | 6-5 | 256 | Penn State |
| 2 | JT Tuimoloau | DE | 6-4 | 265 | Ohio State |
| 3 | Justin Walley | CB | 5-10 | 190 | Minnesota |
| 4 | Jalen Travis | OT | 6-7 | 339 | Iowa State |
| 5 | DJ Giddens | RB | 6-1 | 212 | Kansas State |
| 6 | Riley Leonard | QB | 6-3 | 216 | Notre Dame |
| 6 | Tim Smith | DT | 6-4 | 302 | Alabama |
| 7 | Hunter Wohler | S | 6-2 | 213 | Wisconsin |

That Tyler Warren fell to the Colts with the 14th overall pick was good luck, as general manager Chris Ballard admitted, considering that the tight end ranked high on the draft board and addressed an obvious need for a team that was among the worst in production at the position. JT Tuimoloau is a seasoned pass-rusher who should see his share of snaps in passing situations. Justin Walley was a bit of a surprise considering his smaller size. Ballard has typically required length in his corners. But Walley should be in the immediate mix for snaps. DJ Giddens has a chance to be a reliable complement to Jonathan Taylor. Tim Smith should see the field as a capable backup run-stuffer.

# JAGUARS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Carolina | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Houston | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at San Francisco | 4:05 |
| Oct. 6 | Kansas City | 8:15 |
| Oct. 12 | Seattle | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | L.A. Rams (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 2 | at Las Vegas | 4:05 |
| Nov. 9 | at Houston | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at Arizona | 4:05 |
| Nov. 30 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Denver | 4:05 |
| Dec. 28 | at Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| TBD | Tennessee | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 1 |
| 2021 | 3 |
| 2022 AFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| 2023 | 9 |
| 2024 | 4 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Liam Coen
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** First season
**Offensive Coordinator:** Grant Udinski
**Defensive Coordinator:** Anthony Campanile
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Heath Farwell
**Quarterbacks:** Spencer Whipple
**Running Backs:** Chad Morton
**Wide Receivers:** Edgar Bennett
**Tight Ends:** Richard Angulo
**Offensive Line:** Shaun Sarrett
**Defensive Line:** Matt Edwards
**Linebackers:** Tem Lukabu
**Defensive Backs:** Anthony Perkins
**Secondary:** Ron Milus

AFC SOUTH FORECAST
3

The Jaguars' bold, new era is upon us. It's an aggressive, confident era — and while quarterback Trevor Lawrence remains the key to the franchise, there will be far more to the Jaguars moving forward.

That became clear in April, when the Jaguars traded up three spots to select wide receiver/cornerback Travis Hunter No. 2 overall in the 2025 NFL Draft — stunning the NFL world and showing how the franchise will operate under head coach Liam Coen, general manager James Gladstone and executive vice president of football operations Tony Boselli. "This was certainly a statement for how we plan to move, how we plan to operate," Gladstone says.

The focus: building around Lawrence and helping the fifth-year veteran fulfill the promise that made him the No. 1 overall selection in the 2021 NFL Draft. "This will all be about Trevor right now," Coen said.

If bold is one theme around the Jaguars, youth is another, with the 39-year-old Coen — who spent last season as the Tampa Bay Buccaneers' offensive coordinator — the NFL's fifth-youngest head coach and Gladstone at 34 its youngest general manager.

Also on hand are 43-year-old defensive coordinator Anthony Campanile (former run game coordinator and linebackers coach with the Green Bay Packers) and 29-year-old offensive coordinator Grant Udinski (former assistant offensive coordinator with the Minnesota Vikings).

That young group focused on the offensive line in free agency, then added speed elsewhere in free agency and the draft. The goal was to improve a running game that has struggled in recent seasons and enhance the offense's quick-strike ability. Adding Hunter was a major step. He will play both offense and defense, becoming the first NFL player in six decades to do so extensively — and Gladstone's expectation is that he "has the capacity to alter the trajectory of the sport itself."

## OFFENSE

What's new in 2025? Everything, but notable is the offense that Coen and Udinski will install around Lawrence — an offense rooted in the principles of Los Angeles Rams head coach Sean McVay. Coen served as the Rams' offensive coordinator in 2022, and Udinski spent the past three seasons working for Minnesota head coach Kevin O'Connell, the Rams' coordinator in 2021-22.

Coen's offensive philosophy centers around a strong offensive line, with a focus on the running game that was evident as the Buccaneers improved from last in the NFL in the category in 2023 to No. 4 in 2024, Coen's lone season with the team. That emphasis figures to ease the pressure on Lawrence, who enters 2025 searching for more consistency and needing to remain healthy after dealing with injuries late in 2023 and 2024.

A major focus of the Jaguars' offseason was to improve an offensive line that — while adequate in pass protection last season — struggled enough in the running game that it hampered the entire offense.

Toward that end, the Jaguars signed center Robert Hainsey (Tampa Bay Buccaneers), left guard Patrick Mekari (Baltimore Ravens), tackles Fred Johnson (Philadelphia Eagles) and Chuma Edoga (Dallas Cowboys) as free agents. They also selected guard Wyatt Milum in Round 3. Projected starters are Hainsey and Mekari, along with right tackle Anton Harrison, left guard Ezra Cleveland and left tackle Walker Little. But this is a unique situation in which talk of training camp competition at all spots is more than just speculation.

BRIAN THOMAS JR.
WIDE RECEIVER

JEREMY REPER-IMAGN IMAGES

A major difference for the Jaguars in 2025 figures to be speed and big-play potential. Second-year wide receiver Brian Thomas Jr. has the ability to be one of the NFL's best players at his position, and Hunter — who will begin his career working full-time with the offense — possesses rare playmaking ability.

The Jaguars also signed former Washington Commanders wide receiver Dyami Brown in free agency. The belief within the organization is that all three receivers can stretch the defense and beat single coverage.

Running back, too, will be an area to watch. Bhayshul Tuten, a fourth-round selection from Virginia Tech, has rare speed, and he and seventh-round running back LeQuint Allen Jr. could push veterans Tank Bigsby and Travis Etienne Jr. for snaps in an offense that figures to use three backs extensively.

## DEFENSE

The theme here, too, is new — with Campanile and a mostly new staff reshaping the defense after a disastrous 2024 season in which the unit repeatedly gave up big, explosive plays while failing to pressure the passer or force turnovers consistently.

Look for the Jaguars to play a 4-3-based scheme under Campanile with a heavy emphasis on zone in the secondary.

Key to the unit: ends Travon Walker and Josh Hines-Allen, the defense's best players and one of the NFL's better edge tandems. Also key in 2025: Veteran Arik Armstead is expected to start at tackle after rotating with Walker and Hines-Allen in his first season with the team in 2024. That means for Armstead a return to the natural position where he excelled in his first nine NFL seasons with the San Francisco 49ers.

Second-year tackle Maason Smith also could be critical to the defensive interior, and he must continue to build on the improvement he showed as a penetrating pass-rusher late last season. Middle linebacker Foyesade Oluokun is a consistent presence against the run, but one of Campanile's tasks is to improve the run defense — an area that has been too inconsistent under two different staffs the past two seasons.

Cornerback Tyson Campbell is the top player in a reshaped Jaguars secondary, and he must stay healthy to be the core player the team envisioned when he signed a long-term extension in the 2024 offseason. Nickelback Jourdan Lewis and safety Eric Murray are expected to provide experience and consistency, with starters at the other safety spot and outside corner uncertain entering training camp. The Jaguars love rookie third-round selection Caleb Ransaw at safety, and he could win the job in camp.

It will be intriguing to see how the Jaguars use Hunter. While the 2024 Heisman Trophy winner will play full-time offensively, he likely will also be on the field extensively in passing situations on defense, with the Jaguars wanting to use his high-end ball skills to create turnovers after the team finished last in the NFL in takeaways in 2024.

## SPECIALISTS

Special teams are a team strength entering 2025, with punter Logan Cooke a Pro Bowl selection in 2024 and long-snapper Ross Matiscik a Pro Bowl selection each of the past two seasons. Placekicker Cam Little also showed high-end leg strength as a rookie in 2024, and it would be a surprise if this isn't the Jaguars' long-term snapper/punter/kicker trio for the foreseeable future.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Look for the Jaguars to be much different — and much improved — in 2025. The belief within the organization is that they can compete for the AFC South title.

To do so, Lawrence must stay healthy, and a running game that has struggled in recent seasons must improve. Toward that end, the Jaguars added significant speed at the skill positions and veterans along the offensive line. If those moves pay off, and if Lawrence can return to the form he showed late in 2022 and early in 2023, the Jaguars can improve quickly.

## 2024 RESULTS (4-13)

| Date | Opponent | W/L | Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. 8 | at Miami | L | 17-20 |
| Sept. 15 | Cleveland | L | 13-18 |
| Sept. 23 | at Buffalo | L | 10-47 |
| Sept. 29 | at Houston | L | 20-24 |
| Oct. 6 | Indianapolis | W | 37-34 |
| Oct. 13 | Chicago | L | 16-35 |
| Oct. 20 | New England | W | 32-16 |
| Oct. 27 | Green Bay | L | 27-30 |
| Nov. 3 | at Philadelphia | L | 23-28 |
| Nov. 10 | Minnesota | L | 7-12 |
| Nov. 17 | at Detroit | L | 6-52 |
| Dec. 1 | Houston | L | 20-23 |
| Dec. 8 | at Tennessee | W | 10-6 |
| Dec. 15 | N.Y. Jets | L | 25-32 |
| Dec. 22 | at Las Vegas | L | 14-19 |
| Dec. 29 | Tennessee | W | 20-13 |
| Jan. 5 | at Indianapolis (ot) | L | 23-26 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 306.2 | 25 | 12 |
| Rushing | 101.7 | 26 | 12 |
| Passing | 204.5 | 24 | 12 |
| Scoring | 18.8 | 26 | 12 |
| Third Down % | 37.3 | 22 | 12 |
| Points/Play | 0.323 | 24 | 11 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 389.9 | 31 | 16 |
| Rushing | 132.6 | 25 | 15 |
| Passing | 257.4 | 32 | 16 |
| Scoring | 25.6 | T28 | T14 |
| Interceptions | 6 | 30 | 15 |
| Sacks | 34 | 28 | 14 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.387 | 21 | 11 |
| TO Differential | -15 | 29 | 13 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trevor Lawrence | 284 | 172 | 2,045 | 11 | 7 |
| Mac Jones | 262 | 171 | 1,672 | 8 | 8 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tank Bigsby | 168 | 766 | 4.6 | 7 |
| Travis Etienne Jr. | 150 | 558 | 3.7 | 2 |
| D'Ernest Johnson | 32 | 143 | 4.5 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brian Thomas Jr. | 87 | 1,282 | 14.7 | 10 |
| Evan Engram | 47 | 365 | 7.8 | 1 |
| Brenton Strange | 40 | 411 | 10.3 | 2 |
| Travis Etienne Jr. | 39 | 254 | 6.5 | 0 |
| Parker Washington | 32 | 390 | 12.2 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Cam Little, 27-29 FGs, 27-27 PATs, 108 points
**TACKLES:** Devin Lloyd, 113; Foyesade Oluokun, 108
**SACKS:** Travon Walker, 10.5; Josh Hines-Allen, 8.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** 6 players tied with 1

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**OUTSIDE THE SOUTH** How much have the Jaguars changed in a year? One example was evident at the 2025 NFL Draft, which saw the team move away from a clear Southeastern Conference influence the previous season. Former general manager Trent Baalke took SEC players with six of nine selections in 2024. New GM **James Gladstone** (far left) also selected nine players in his first draft. The only SEC player: Auburn linebacker Jalen McLeod in the sixth round.

DOUG ENGLE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

**TWO MORE YEARS** The Jaguars went through a major cultural change this offseason with the hiring of **Liam Coen** (center) as head coach, Gladstone as general manager and **Tony Boselli** (right) as executive vice president of football operations. A major structural change is happening, too, with their current playing facility — EverBank Stadium — beginning a $1.4 billion renovation. That project was approved in June 2024, with construction beginning earlier this year. The Jaguars will play home games at full capacity in 2025, then play at a reduced capacity of about 43,500 in 2026. They will play home games away from Jacksonville — likely in Orlando or Gainesville — in 2027, with the renovated stadium expected to be ready for the 2028 season.

**YOUTH SERVED** The Jaguars don't just have a new culture; they have a young culture. Gladstone at 34 is the NFL's youngest general manager, Coen at 39 is the NFL's fifth-youngest head coach and Udinski at 29 is the league's youngest offensive coordinator. Boselli at 52 is the "oldest" person among the Jaguars' key decision-makers. "It bothers me because I'm old," Boselli says of the discussion around the topic. "I wish I was 39 or 34. It sounds a lot better than 52."

# SCOUTING THE JAGUARS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP JACKSONVILLE

"Owner Shad Khan is counting on a new way of doing business paying dividends. It's going to take time for Liam Coen, James Gladstone and Tony Boselli to get things going in the right direction, but they're off to a positive start. … When the Jaguars pushed their chips into the middle of the table and traded up for Travis Hunter, they acquired a unique two-way player. Look for him to start at wide receiver and play a lot of snaps at corner. I think he can do it as long as they use him the right way and don't wear him out. … Brian Thomas Jr. is a lot faster than most bigger receivers. … Not a big fan of this offensive line. I think Patrick Mekari and Wyatt Milum will inject toughness and savvy. … Walker Little is a passable left tackle, but he's far from great. … Trevor Lawrence has every tool to be a plus quarterback, but he's got to be more careful and slide more to protect himself. The concussion he took in the Texans game was also his fault for waiting too long to commit to a slide. Lawrence has a classic throwing delivery like a baseball pitcher. … Josh Hines-Allen would get a lot more attention for his pass rushing and overall game if he wasn't playing in such a small market on a losing team. … Travon Walker is slowly starting to show why former general manager Trent Baalke picked him so high. … Foyesade Oluokun answers the bell every Sunday; what a competitor. … Jourdan Lewis gives them a legit nickel. … They will miss Andre Cisco at safety. … Darnell Savage is very athletic. … Hunter is already the second-best corner on the roster behind Tyson Campbell."

## 2025 JAGUARS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Lawrence, Trevor | QB | 6-6 | 220 | 4 | Clemson | D1-21 | D1-Jac-21 |
| 12 | Mullens, Nick | QB | 6-0 | 210 | 7 | Southern Miss | FA-Min-25 | FA-SF-17 |
| 18 | Wolford, John | QB | 6-1 | 218 | 5 | Wake Forest | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-18 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Bigsby, Tank | RB | 5-11 | 215 | 2 | Auburn | D3-23 | D3-Jac-23 |
| 1 | Etienne Jr., Travis | RB | 5-10 | 215 | 4 | Clemson | D1-21 | D1-Jac-21 |
| 31 | Robinson, Keilan | RB | 5-8 | 191 | 1 | Texas | D5-24 | D5-Jac-24 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 49 | Bowman, Shawn | TE | 6-4 | 249 | 1 | Rutgers | FA-24 | FA-Jac-24 |
| 5 | Brown, Dyami | WR | 6-0 | 185 | 4 | North Carolina | FA-Was-25 | D3b-Was-21 |
| 80 | Cephus, Joshua | WR | 6-2 | 193 | 1 | UTSA | FA-24 | FA-Jac-24 |
| 84 | Long, Hunter | TE | 6-5 | 243 | 4 | Boston College | FA-LAR-25 | D3-Mia-21 |
| | Morris, Quintin | TE | 6-2 | 252 | 3 | Bowling Green | FA-Buf-25 | FA-Buf-21 |
| 81 | Mundt, Johnny | TE | 6-4 | 243 | 7 | Oregon | FA-Min-25 | FA-LAR-17 |
| 88 | Murtagh, Patrick | TE | 6-6 | 250 | 1 | None | FA-24 | FA-Jac-24 |
| 84 | Rees-Zammit, Louis | WR | 6-2 | 209 | 1 | None | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 85 | Strange, Brenton | TE | 6-4 | 253 | 2 | Penn State | D2-23 | D2-Jac-23 |
| 7 | Thomas Jr., Brian | WR | 6-2 | 209 | 1 | LSU | D1-24 | D1-Jac-24 |
| 86 | Trammell, Austin | WR | 5-10 | 185 | 4 | Rice | FA-24 | FA-Atl-21 |
| 11 | Washington, Parker | WR | 5-10 | 204 | 2 | Penn State | D6-23 | D6-Jac-23 |
| 86 | White Jr., David | WR | 6-2 | 201 | 1 | Western Carolina | FA-24 | FA-Jac-24 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 76 | Cleveland, Ezra | OL | 6-6 | 312 | 5 | Boise State | T-Min-23 | D2-Min-20 |
| 78 | Daley, Dennis | OL | 6-6 | 326 | 6 | South Carolina | FA-24 | D6-Car-19 |
| 55 | Edoga, Chuma | OL | 6-4 | 315 | 6 | USC | FA-Dal-25 | D3b-NYJ-19 |
| 79 | Fortner, Luke | OL | 6-4 | 307 | 3 | Kentucky | D3-22 | D3-Jac-22 |
| 62 | Foster, Javon | OL | 6-5 | 313 | 1 | Missouri | D4-24 | D4-Jac-24 |
| 73 | Hainsey, Robert | OL | 6-4 | 306 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-TB-25 | D3-TB-21 |
| 77 | Harrison, Anton | OL | 6-4 | 315 | 2 | Oklahoma | D1-23 | D1-Jac-23 |
| 75 | Hodges, Cooper | OL | 6-4 | 305 | 2 | App State | D7-23 | D7-Jac-23 |
| 74 | Johnson, Fred | OL | 6-7 | 326 | 6 | Florida | FA-Phi-25 | FA-Pit-19 |
| 72 | Little, Walker | OL | 6-7 | 325 | 4 | Stanford | D2-21 | D2-Jac-21 |
| 65 | Mekari, Patrick | OL | 6-4 | 305 | 6 | California | FA-Bal-25 | FA-Bal-19 |
| 70 | Van Lanen, Cole | OL | 6-5 | 312 | 4 | Wisconsin | T-GB-22 | D6a-GB-21 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 91 | Armstead, Arik | DE | 6-7 | 290 | 10 | Oregon | FA-SF-24 | D1-SF-15 |
| 59 | Cole, Myles | DE | 6-6 | 278 | 1 | Texas Tech | D7-24 | D7-Jac-24 |
| 52 | Hamilton, DaVon | DT | 6-4 | 335 | 5 | Ohio State | D3-20 | D3-Jac-20 |
| 41 | Hines-Allen, Josh | DE | 6-5 | 255 | 6 | Kentucky | D1-19 | D1-Jac-19 |
| 98 | Jefferson, Jordan | DT | 6-2 | 316 | 1 | LSU | D4-24 | D4-Jac-24 |
| 93 | Lacy, Tyler | DT | 6-4 | 279 | 2 | Oklahoma State | D4-23 | D4-Jac-23 |
| | Ogbah, Emmanuel | DE | 6-4 | 275 | 9 | Oklahoma State | FA-Mia-25 | D2-Cle-16 |
| 94 | Smith, Maason | DT | 6-5 | 306 | 1 | LSU | D2-24 | D2-Jac-24 |
| 44 | Walker, Travon | DE | 6-5 | 272 | 3 | Georgia | D1-22 | D1-Jac-22 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56 | Abdullah, Yasir | LB | 6-1 | 240 | 2 | Louisville | D5-23 | D5-Jac-23 |
| 0 | Lloyd, Devin | LB | 6-3 | 235 | 3 | Utah | D1-22 | D1-Jac-22 |
| 51 | Miller, Ventrell | LB | 6-0 | 232 | 2 | Florida | D4-23 | D4-Jac-23 |
| 48 | Muma, Chad | LB | 6-3 | 239 | 3 | Wyoming | D3-22 | D3-Jac-22 |
| 23 | Oluokun, Foyesade | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 7 | Yale | FA-Atl-22 | D6b-Atl-18 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Braswell, Christian | CB | 5-11 | 185 | 2 | Rutgers | D6-23 | D6-Jac-23 |
| 30 | Brown, Montaric | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 3 | Arkansas | D7-22 | D7-Jac-22 |
| 3 | Campbell, Tyson | CB | 6-1 | 195 | 4 | Georgia | D2-21 | D2-Jac-21 |
| 26 | Johnson, Antonio | S | 6-2 | 198 | 2 | Texas A&M | D5-23 | D5-Jac-23 |
| 22 | Jones, Jarrian | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Florida State | D3-24 | D3-Jac-24 |
| 2 | Lewis, Jourdan | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 8 | Michigan | FA-Dal-25 | D3-Dal-17 |
| 34 | McPhearson, Zechariah | CB | 5-11 | 191 | 3 | Texas Tech | FA-24 | D4-Phi-21 |
| 29 | Murray, Eric | S | 5-11 | 199 | 9 | Minnesota | FA-Hou-25 | D4b-KC-16 |
| 24 | Prince, De'Antre | CB | 6-0 | 183 | 1 | Ole Miss | D5-24 | D5-Jac-24 |
| 6 | Savage, Darnell | S | 5-11 | 198 | 6 | Maryland | FA-GB-24 | D1b-GB-19 |
| 20 | Thomas, Daniel | S | 5-10 | 215 | 5 | Auburn | D5a-20 | D5a-Jac-20 |
| 42 | Wingard, Andrew | S | 6-0 | 200 | 6 | Wyoming | FA-19 | FA-Jac-19 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Cooke, Logan | P | 6-5 | 230 | 7 | Mississippi State | D7b-18 | D7b-Jac-18 |
| 39 | Little, Cam | K | 6-1 | 172 | 1 | Arkansas | D6-24 | D6-Jac-24 |
| 46 | Matiscik, Ross | LS | 6-0 | 240 | 5 | Baylor | FA-20 | FA-Jac-20 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 7 | Brian Thomas Jr. | 80 | Joshua Cephus |
| WR | 5 | Dyami Brown | 11 | Parker Washington |
| WR | 12 | Travis Hunter (R) | 86 | Austin Trammell |
| LT | 72 | Walker Little | 74 | Fred Johnson |
| LG | 76 | Ezra Cleveland | 64 | Wyatt Milum (R) |
| C | 73 | Robert Hainsey | 60 | Jonah Monheim (R) |
| RG | 65 | Patrick Mekari | 70 | Cole Van Lanen |
| RT | 77 | Anton Harrison | 55 | Chuma Edoga |
| TE | 85 | Brenton Strange | 84 | Hunter Long |
| QB | 16 | Trevor Lawrence | 12 | Nick Mullens |
| RB | 4 | Tank Bigsby | 33 | Bhayshul Tuten (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 44 | Travon Walker | 59 | Myles Cole |
| DT | 52 | DaVon Hamilton | 98 | Jordan Jefferson |
| DT | 91 | Arik Armstead | 94 | Maason Smith |
| DE | 41 | Josh Hines-Allen | | Emmanuel Ogbah |
| OLB | 0 | Devin Lloyd | 53 | Jalen McLeod (R) |
| MLB | 23 | Foyesade Oluokun | 54 | Jack Kiser (R) |
| )LB | 51 | Ventrell Miller | 54 | Jack Kiser (R) |
| CB | 3 | Tyson Campbell | 2 | Jourdan Lewis |
| CB | 30 | Montaric Brown | 12 | Travis Hunter (R) |
| S | 29 | Eric Murray | 25 | Rayuan Lane III (R) |
| S | 42 | Andrew Wingard | 27 | Caleb Ransaw (R) |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 39 | Cam Little | KR | 11 | Parker Washington |
| P | 9 | Logan Cooke | PR | 11 | Parker Washington |

9

The Jaguars finished last in the NFL in forcing only nine turnovers as a defense — the second time in the 17-game era a team has finished with fewer than 10 turnovers. (The 2021 Jaguars also did it. Sorry Jaguars fans.)

## JAGS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Travis Hunter | WR/CB | 6-1 | 185 | Colorado |
| 3 | Caleb Ransaw | S | 5-11 | 197 | Tulane |
| 3 | Wyatt Milum | OL | 6-6 | 317 | West Virginia |
| 4 | Bhayshul Tuten | RB | 5-11 | 209 | Virginia Tech |
| 4 | Jack Kiser | LB | 6-2 | 231 | Notre Dame |
| 6 | Jalen McLeod | LB | 6-1 | 241 | Auburn |
| 6 | Rayuan Lane III | S | 5-11 | 197 | Navy |
| 7 | Jonah Monheim | C | 6-4 | 302 | USC |
| 7 | LeQuint Allen Jr. | RB | 6-0 | 201 | Syracuse |

New general manager James Gladstone set the tone early by moving up from No. 5 overall to No. 2 to select Travis Hunter. The Jaguars believe he can be a transformative player, and they expect him to be a difference-maker on both sides of the ball. The team is high on Caleb Ransaw's tackling and athleticism, and he could push to start early. Wyatt Milum is another key, and it won't be surprising if he pushes guard Ezra Cleveland in training camp. Bhayshul Tuten was the fastest running back at the NFL Scouting Combine and among the fastest six or seven players in the '25 draft class at any position.

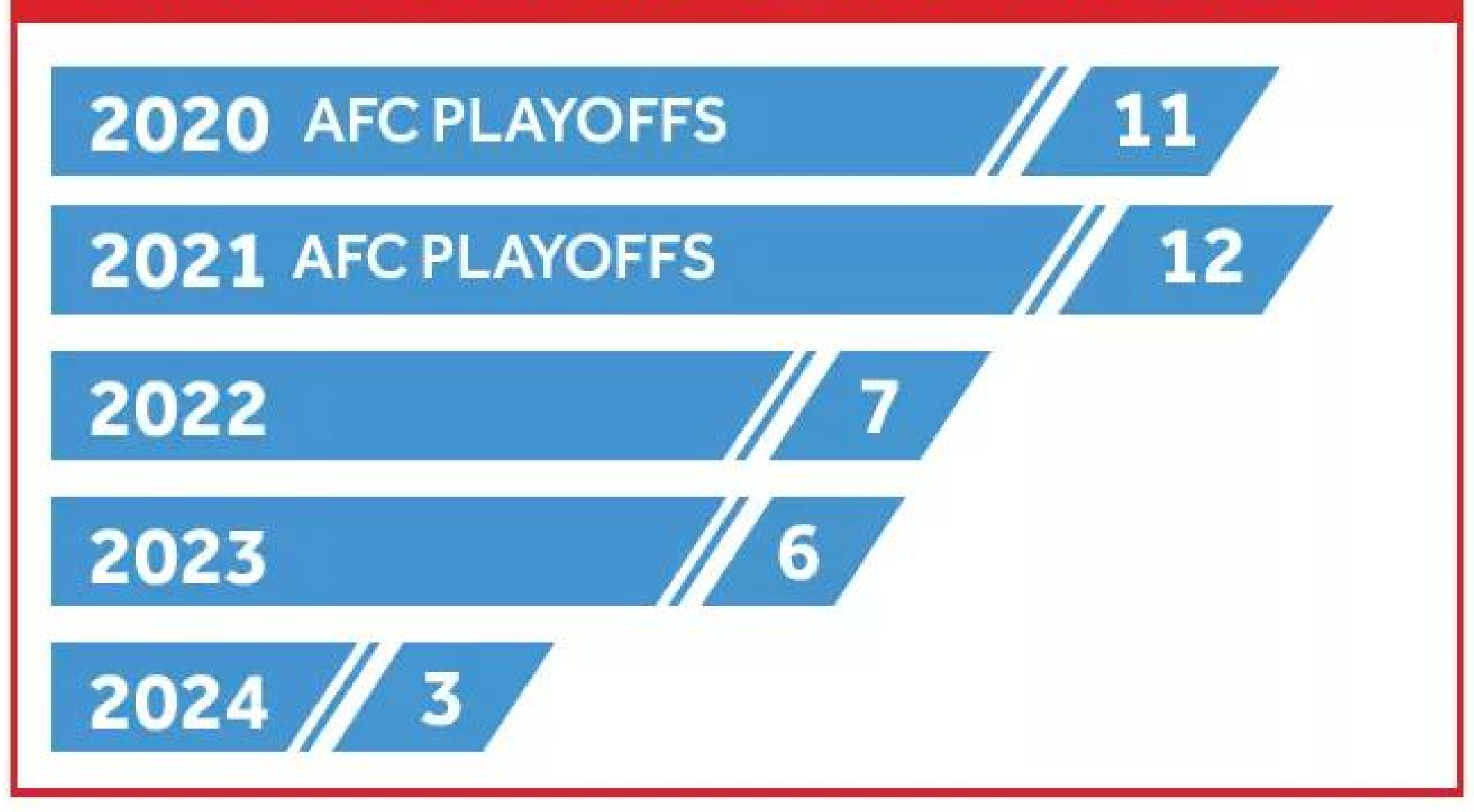
# TITANS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Denver | 4:05 |
| Sept. 14 | L.A. Rams | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at Houston | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at Arizona | 4:05 |
| Oct. 12 | at Las Vegas | 4:05 |
| Oct. 19 | New England | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at Indianapolis | 4:25 |
| Nov. 2 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | BYE | |
| Nov. 16 | Houston | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | Seattle | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at San Francisco | 4:25 |
| Dec. 21 | Kansas City | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Jacksonville | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Brian Callahan
**Record With Team:** 3-14
**Career Record:** 3-14
**Offensive Coordinator:** Nick Holz
**Defensive Coordinator:** Dennard Wilson
**Special Teams:** John Fassel
**Quarterbacks:** Bo Hardegree
**Running Backs:** Randy Jordan
**Wide Receivers:** Tyke Tolbert
**Tight Ends:** Luke Stocker
**Offensive Line:** Bill Callahan
**Defensive Line:** Tracy Rocker
**Linebackers:** Frank Bush
**Outside Linebackers:** Ben Bloom
**Passing Game Coordinator/Cornerbacks:** Tony Oden
**Secondary/Safeties:** Steve Jackson

AFC SOUTH FORECAST
4

The 2025 Tennessee Titans are under new management. Player acquisition has been a major problem for the franchise since the dreadful first-round selection of Isaiah Wilson in 2020, and in many ways, the team just never recovered from COVID-19. After a major downturn in former general manager Jon Robinson's results and a failed two-year stint from Ran Carthon, owner Amy Adams Strunk put Chad Brinker in charge of the team's football operations, and Brinker hired Mike Borgonzi as the new general manager. As Brinker and Borgonzi have begun to rebuild a thin roster, they've emphasized durability and upside.

"Big, fast, tough football players who love winning more than anything else, I mean, that's a Titan," says Brinker. "I think over time, as you see how this unfolds, you might be able to draft them for us ahead of time because you're going to see, 'Oh, that looks like a Titan.' There's definitely a DNA we're looking for in our players, and I think everybody wants that, but it's hard to find. You've got to do a lot of work, and hopefully, those guys that we're bringing in here will prove us right."

And no player's upside is more important than that of No. 1 overall pick Cam Ward, who's been installed as the new face of the franchise and brings the hope that the Titans have found a long-term quarterback solution.

## OFFENSE

Ward's progress will be the story of the season for the Titans, and it will tell us if head coach Brian Callahan is the quarterback guru the Titans thought he was when they hired him in 2024. Ward, the Incarnate Word, Washington State and Miami (Fla.) product, showed the Titans a solid growth curve over his college career, and they hope that all that experience will translate to the next level as it did for 2024 first-rounders Bo Nix and Michael Penix Jr.

The fear from the outside is that Ward carries, to a lesser degree, some of the negative features of incumbent Will Levis' game — hero-ball decision-making, recklessness with the football and concerns about accuracy.

The Titans have failed in their three first-round swings at quarterback — Vince Young, Jake Locker and Marcus Mariota — since Steve McNair was the No. 3 overall pick for the Houston Oilers in the 1995 draft. They need Ward to hit.

Before Ward's arrival, they worked to fortify their shaky offensive line with a big free-agency deal for Pittsburgh Steelers left tackle Dan Moore Jr. and a one-year contract for right guard Kevin Zeitler. Moore's arrival means that 2024 first-rounder JC Latham moves to right tackle, where he played at Alabama. Once Lloyd Cushenberry III is fully recovered from his midseason Achilles injury, the line will be composed of three veterans (Moore, Zeitler and Cushenberry) and two first-round picks (Peter Skoronski and Latham).

Offensive line coach Bill Callahan was viewed as a huge get for his son, but Year 1 featured overestimations of personnel. It's an area that will be under great scrutiny and has to be significantly better.

Levis hardly had great weaponry. The Titans traded the slowing DeAndre Hopkins during the season and lost touchdown machine Nick Westbrook-Ikhine in free agency. Now, to team with Calvin Ridley, they've added steady but aging veteran Tyler Lockett; Van Jefferson, who's faded since early in his career; and two intriguing draft picks — speedy fourth-rounder Chimere Dike from Florida and nicely rounded Elic Ayomanor out of Stanford, who had a very big game against No. 2 overall pick Travis Hunter.

**AMANI HOOKER**
SAFETY

DENNY SIMMONS / THE TENNESSEAN

Running back Tony Pollard was the most reliable player on the team last year, while the Titans tried to shoehorn Tyjae Spears into a co-No. 1 role. Spears excels as a pass-catcher in space, but he was consistently dinged up and didn't do a lot to make the team want to take Pollard off the field.

The Titans sought a bigger between-the-tackles back to diversify things and came out of the draft with former linebacker Kalel Mullings of Michigan in the sixth round.

So, with a high-profile rookie quarterback, a jelling line, all those new pass-catchers and a contributing new back, what should the expectations be? The Titans are preaching patience and discipline, not just on offense. If there is progress but not enough wins, there is the danger that Adams Strunk will fire someone, as she's done with key high-ranking football personnel during or after each of the past three seasons.

## DEFENSE

This is not a dynamic team until it shows us otherwise. The team has no headliner at edge and no pass-rusher for an offense to fear. Oluwafemi Oladejo, the Titans' second-round pick, is yet another example. After a trade back, the team selected Oladejo 52nd overall. It's good that they got beefier than Harold Landry III, whom they released, but Oladejo was an inside linebacker until the final 10 games of his career at UCLA and will need time to further develop his skill at chasing quarterbacks.

Coordinator Dennard Wilson's unit was secondary-centric in his first season, even as it got only five games from L'Jarius Sneed in Sneed's first season in Tennessee. A year after trading a third-round pick to the Chiefs to acquire him, the Titans need a lot more than they got from a guy with a bad knee who dealt with a quad injury in 2024 and also got involved in an off-the-field incident.

The team's offseason hole-patching included edges Dre'Mont Jones and Lorenzo Carter, safety Xavier Woods and linebacker Cody Barton, who is more instinctive than Kenneth Murray Jr. The Titans need improve their red-zone defense, which tied for 25th by allowing TDs nearly two-thirds of the time. They also need to force more turnovers, a category in which they ranked in the middle of the league.

Tackle Jeffery Simmons said early on last season that "no one runs against the Titans," but then the team wound up yielding 133.9 rushing yards per game (26th), an effort that hardly allowed the team to set the tone it wanted. Simmons and T'Vondre Sweat need to be the interior forces that the team expects, and they need the help to arrive behind them in a timely fashion. Wilson's unit seemingly still lacks the personnel he needs to rush the passer effectively and force the issue.

## SPECIALISTS

The Titans were disastrous on special teams in Brian Callahan's first season. He hired a special teams coordinator in Colt Anderson with insufficient experience, and then it seemed as if Carthon didn't give consideration to special teams' qualities when filling the final spots on the roster.

Anderson is gone, and John "Bones" Fassel is replacing him. A veteran special teams coach and a GM who's likely to work with him on what he needs should yield far better results. They've chosen placement over distance with Johnny Hekker at punter rather than Ryan Stonehouse. Placekicker Joey Slye has questionable accuracy but certainly possesses a bigger leg than Nick Folk did.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

A Titans team lacking blue-chip talent is built on youth, increased speed, better sturdiness and a whole lot of hope. The Titans may have a chance to pick up a few extra wins against a schedule that includes two games apiece vs. the new-regime Jaguars and the stuck-in-neutral Colts in the AFC South, as well as contests against the rebuilding Browns, Saints and Patriots. The primary goal for the franchise this season is to see some hope and progress at the quarterback position.

## 2024 RESULTS (3-14)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Chicago | L | 17-24 |
| Sept. | 15 | N.Y. Jets | L | 17-24 |
| Sept. | 22 | Green Bay | L | 14-30 |
| Sept. | 30 | at Miami | W | 31-12 |
| Oct. | 13 | Indianapolis | L | 17-20 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Buffalo | L | 10-34 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Detroit | L | 14-52 |
| Nov. | 3 | New England (ot) | W | 20-17 |
| Nov. | 10 | at L.A. Chargers | L | 17-27 |
| Nov. | 17 | Minnesota | L | 13-23 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Houston | W | 32-27 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Washington | L | 19-42 |
| Dec. | 8 | Jacksonville | L | 6-10 |
| Dec. | 15 | Cincinnati | L | 27-37 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Indianapolis | L | 30-38 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Jacksonville | L | 13-20 |
| Jan. | 5 | Houston | L | 14-23 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 304.2 | 26 | 13 |
| Rushing | 109.1 | T19 | 9 |
| Passing | 195.1 | 26 | 14 |
| Scoring | 18.3 | 27 | 13 |
| Third Down % | 37.7 | T19 | T10 |
| Points/Play | 0.301 | 27 | 13 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 311.2 | 2 | 1 |
| Rushing | 133.9 | 26 | 16 |
| Passing | 177.3 | 2 | 1 |
| Scoring | 27.1 | 30 | 16 |
| Interceptions | 11 | T19 | 10 |
| Sacks | 32 | T29 | 15 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.456 | 31 | 16 |
| TO Differential | -16 | T30 | T15 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Will Levis | 301 | 190 | 2,091 | 13 | 12 |
| Mason Rudolph | 228 | 146 | 1,530 | 9 | 9 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tony Pollard | 260 | 1,079 | 4.2 | 5 |
| Tyjae Spears | 84 | 312 | 3.7 | 4 |
| Will Levis | 45 | 183 | 4.1 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Calvin Ridley | 64 | 1,017 | 15.9 | 4 |
| Chig Okonkwo | 52 | 479 | 9.2 | 2 |
| Tony Pollard | 41 | 238 | 5.8 | 0 |
| N. Westbrook-Ikhine | 32 | 497 | 15.5 | 9 |
| Tyjae Spears | 30 | 224 | 7.5 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Nick Folk, 21-22 FGs, 25-25 PATs, 88 points
**TACKLES:** Kenneth Murray Jr., 95; Jeffery Simmons, 76
**SACKS:** Harold Landry III, 9.0; Arden Key, 6.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Amani Hooker, 5; 6 players tied with 1

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**SOLIDIFYING THINGS** At his pro day workout on March 24 in Coral Gables, Florida, **Cam Ward** (second from right) rolled out to the left on one pass, carrying him in the direction of Titans decision-makers **Chad Brinker** (far left) and **Mike Borgonzi** (far right). Ward continued to move in their direction after he let the pass fly and delivered them a message: "I'm solidifying it today," he told them about the No. 1 overall pick. The Titans met with him days later for a private workout, at which owner **Amy Adams Strunk** (third from left) met him and his family. Not too long after, Titans brass came to a consensus that Ward was their guy.

THE TENNESSEAN/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

**UNCOMMON METRIC** Borgonzi brought the Titans a metric they had not relied on before in looking at draft prospects. The team really focused on durability and trying to forecast injuries, and in Kansas City, Borgonzi had looked closely at lean body mass. The GM feels that players with high lean body mass usually play well at the point of attack.

**SUPERMAN** Sixth-round pick Kalel Mullings, a running back from Michigan, is named after Superman. Back on Krypton, before Clark Kent existed, he was known as Kal-el, son of Jor-El. His parents sent him to safety on Earth, where he had superpowers. Calicia and Dale Mullings of Boston gave their son a variation of the Man of Steel's original name. Mullings is an outspoken player who said after Michigan's win over archrival Ohio State and the resulting post-game scuffle that the Buckeyes needed to learn how to lose. He has traveled to South Africa, Portugal, Dubai, Shanghai, Morocco, Costa Rica, Trinidad, France, Spain, Belgium, Jamaica and England.

# SCOUTING THE TITANS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TENNESSEE

"From zero-star recruit to top overall pick, Cam Ward finally gives the Titans a real franchise quarterback. He's got a rocket arm, improvisational skills and leadership qualities. He gives the Titans a real shot to be competitive. … Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears complement each other very well. … Calvin Ridley was expensive, but he proved he was worth the money. … Tyler Lockett should provide the kind of security blanket and seasoning that Ward needs as a rookie. … Chig Okonkwo is one of the fastest tight ends in the NFL. … There's zero quality depth at receiver, unless Elic Ayomanor is ready to go as a rookie. … Where I see real progress from Tennessee is its offensive line. They got it right with Peter Skoronski and JC Latham. Then, they plug in a proven vet with Kevin Zeitler. … Dan Moore Jr. is a solid left tackle but such an overpay. … That's a wrecking crew duo at defensive tackle with Jeffery Simmons and T'Vondre Sweat. … Edge rush and linebacker are average overall. … I think they'll get more out of L'Jarius Sneed this year. … Roger McCreary is a solid corner. … Mike Borgonzi has been ready to be a general manager for a long time. He got excellent training in Kansas City with Brett Veach and Andy Reid. Between him and Brian Callahan, I see this as an improving franchise as far as how they're being run. Ran Carthon wasn't a good GM and wasn't ready for the assignment and clashed with former head coach Mike Vrabel. The synergy they have now is a big upgrade, and that's what [owner] Amy Adams Strunk wanted to see."

## 2025 TITANS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Allen, Brandon | QB | 6-2 | 209 | 8 | Arkansas | FA-SF-25 | D6-Jac-16 |
| 15 | Boyle, Tim | QB | 6-4 | 233 | 6 | Eastern Kentucky | FA-NYG-25 | FA-GB-18 |
| 8 | Levis, Will | QB | 6-4 | 229 | 2 | Kentucky | D2-23 | D2-Ten-23 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | Chestnut, Julius | RB | 5-11 | 228 | 3 | Sacred Heart | FA-22 | FA-Ten-22 |
| 20 | Pollard, Tony | RB | 6-0 | 209 | 6 | Memphis | FA-Dal-24 | D4a-Dal-19 |
| 2 | Spears, Tyjae | RB | 5-11 | 195 | 2 | Tulane | D3-23 | D3-Ten-23 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Burks, Treylon | WR | 6-2 | 225 | 3 | Arkansas | D1-22 | D1-Ten-22 |
| 14 | Dowell, Colton | WR | 6-3 | 212 | 2 | Tennessee-Martin | D7-23 | D7-Ten-23 |
| 19 | Jackson, Jha'Quan | WR | 5-9 | 188 | 1 | Tulane | D6-24 | D6-Ten-24 |
| 11 | Jefferson, Van | WR | 6-1 | 200 | 5 | Florida | FA-Pit-25 | D2b-LAR-20 |
| 12 | Kinsey, Mason | WR | 5-11 | 200 | 2 | Berry College | FA-21 | FA-Ten-20 |
| 4 | Lockett, Tyler | WR | 5-10 | 182 | 10 | Kansas State | FA-Sea-25 | D3-Sea-15 |
| 88 | Martin-Robinson, David | TE | 6-3 | 247 | 1 | Temple | FA-24 | FA-Ten-24 |
| 89 | Odukoya, Thomas | TE | 6-6 | 253 | 1 | Eastern Michigan | FA-22 | FA-Ten-22 |
| 85 | Okonkwo, Chig | TE | 6-3 | 238 | 3 | Maryland | D4b-22 | D4b-Ten-22 |
| 80 | Oliver, Bryce | WR | 6-1 | 214 | 1 | Youngstown State | FA-24 | FA-Ten-24 |
| 13 | Proche II, James | WR | 5-11 | 193 | 5 | SMU | FA-Cle-25 | D6-Bal-20 |
| 0 | Ridley, Calvin | WR | 6-1 | 190 | 6 | Alabama | FA-Jac-24 | D1-Atl-18 |
| 81 | Whyle, Josh | TE | 6-7 | 248 | 2 | Cincinnati | D5-23 | D5-Ten-23 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 67 | Brewer, Chandler | OL | 6-6 | 320 | 3 | Middle Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-LAR-19 |
| 79 | Cushenberry III, Lloyd | C | 6-4 | 315 | 5 | LSU | FA-Den-24 | D3b-Den-20 |
| 71 | Duncan, Jaelyn | OL | 6-6 | 306 | 2 | Maryland | D6-23 | D6-Ten-23 |
| 73 | Hance, Blake | G | 6-5 | 310 | 6 | Northwestern | FA-Jac-25 | FA-Buf-19 |
| 66 | Jaimes, Brenden | OL | 6-5 | 300 | 4 | Nebraska | FA-LAC-25 | D5-LAC-21 |
| 55 | Latham, JC | T | 6-6 | 342 | 1 | Alabama | D1-24 | D1-Ten-24 |
| 62 | Levin, Corey | C/G | 6-4 | 307 | 6 | Chattanooga | W-NYJ-21 | FA-Ten-17 |
| 75 | Moore Jr., Dan | T | 6-5 | 315 | 4 | Texas A&M | FA-Pit-25 | D4a-Pit-21 |
| 60 | Mustipher, Sam | C | 6-3 | 306 | 5 | Notre Dame | FA-LAC-25 | FA-Chi-19 |
| 61 | Ojukwu, John | OL | 6-5 | 309 | 1 | Boise State | FA-23 | FA-Ten-23 |
| 76 | Rupcich, Andrew | OL | 6-6 | 318 | 1 | Culver-Stockton | FA-22 | FA-Ten-22 |
| 77 | Skoronski, Peter | OL | 6-4 | 313 | 2 | Northwestern | D1-23 | D1-Ten-23 |
| 72 | Udoh, Olisaemeka | OL | 6-6 | 320 | 6 | Elon | FA-NO-25 | D6c-Min-19 |
| 70 | Zeitler, Kevin | G | 6-4 | 332 | 13 | Wisconsin | FA-Det-25 | D1b-Cin-12 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 94 | Anderson, Abdullah | DL | 6-4 | 295 | 4 | Bucknell | FA-24 | FA-Chi-18 |
| 91 | Coburn, Keondre | DL | 6-2 | 332 | 2 | Texas | FA-23 | D6-KC-23 |
| 69 | Joseph-Day, Sebastian | DE | 6-4 | 310 | 6 | Rutgers | FA-SF-24 | D6-LAR-18 |
| 97 | Lynch, James | DL | 6-4 | 295 | 5 | Baylor | FA-24 | D4b-Min-20 |
| 98 | Simmons, Jeffery | DT | 6-4 | 305 | 6 | Mississippi State | D1-19 | D1-Ten-19 |
| 93 | Sweat, T'Vondre | NT | 6-4 | 366 | 1 | Texas | D2-24 | D2-Ten-24 |
| | Watkins, Carlos | DT | 6-3 | 305 | 8 | Clemson | FA-Dal-25 | D4b-Hou-17 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | Barton, Cody | LB | 6-2 | 237 | 6 | Utah | FA-Den-25 | D3-Sea-19 |
| | Burney, Amari | LB | 6-2 | 228 | 2 | Florida | W-LV-25 | D6-LV-23 |
| 54 | Carter, Lorenzo | OLB | 6-5 | 265 | 7 | Georgia | FA-Atl-25 | D3-NYG-18 |
| 99 | Gaye, Ali | OLB | 6-6 | 265 | 1 | LSU | W-Hou-24 | FA-Hou-23 |
| 51 | Gray, Cedric | LB | 6-2 | 234 | 1 | North Carolina | D4-24 | D4-Ten-24 |
| 92 | Harrell, Jaylen | OLB | 6-4 | 247 | 1 | Michigan | D7b-24 | D7b-Ten-24 |
| 57 | Jacobs, Curtis | LB | 6-1 | 241 | 1 | Penn State | W-NE-25 | FA-KC-24 |
| 45 | Jones, Dre'Mont | OLB | 6-3 | 285 | 6 | Ohio State | FA-Sea-25 | D3-Den-19 |
| 49 | Key, Arden | OLB | 6-5 | 240 | 7 | LSU | FA-Jac-23 | D3b-LV-18 |
| 90 | Leo, Titus | OLB | 6-3 | 250 | 2 | Wagner | W-NE-25 | D6-Ind-23 |
| | Orji, Anfernee | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 1 | Vanderbilt | W-NO-25 | FA-NO-23 |
| 41 | Reese IV, Otis | LB | 6-3 | 214 | 2 | Ole Miss | FA-23 | FA-Ten-23 |
| 52 | Williams, James | LB | 6-4 | 232 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | D7a-24 | D7a-Ten-24 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Baker Jr., Darrell | CB | 6-1 | 190 | 2 | Georgia Southern | W-Ind-24 | FA-Ari-22 |
| 30 | Brooks, Kendell | DB | 6-0 | 206 | 1 | Michigan State | FA-24 | FA-Ari-23 |
| 44 | Brown, Mike | S | 6-1 | 218 | 2 | Miami (Ohio) | PS-Cle-22 | FA-Min-22 |
| 29 | Brownlee Jr., Jarvis | CB | 5-10 | 194 | 1 | Louisville | D5-24 | D5-Ten-24 |
| 37 | Hooker, Amani | S | 5-11 | 210 | 6 | Iowa | D4-19 | D4-Ten-19 |
| 32 | Jeudy-Lally, Gabe | CB | 6-1 | 186 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-25 | FA-Ten-24 |
| 21 | McCreary, Roger | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 3 | Auburn | D2-22 | D2-Ten-22 |
| | Oruwariye, Amani | CB | 6-2 | 202 | 5 | Penn State | FA-Dal-25 | D5-Det-19 |
| 30 | Perry, Mark | S | 6-0 | 213 | 1 | TCU | W-NE-25 | FA-Mia-24 |
| 38 | Sneed, L'Jarius | CB | 6-1 | 192 | 5 | Louisiana Tech | T-KC-24 | D4-KC-20 |
| 24 | Wood, Julius | DB | 6-1 | 193 | 1 | East Carolina | W-Dal-24 | FA-Dal-24 |
| 25 | Woods, Xavier | S | 5-11 | 200 | 8 | Louisiana Tech | FA-Car-25 | D6-Dal-17 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 | Cox, Morgan | LS | 6-4 | 233 | 15 | Tennessee | FA-Bal-21 | FA-Bal-10 |
| 3 | Hekker, Johnny | P | 6-5 | 225 | 13 | Oregon State | FA-Car-25 | FA-LAR-12 |
| 6 | Slye, Joey | K | 5-11 | 213 | 6 | Virginia Tech | FA-NE-25 | FA-NYG-19 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 0 | Calvin Ridley | 17 | Chimere Dike (R) |
| WR | 4 | Tyler Lockett | 87 | Xavier Restrepo (R) |
| WR | 5 | Elic Ayomanor (R) | 16 | Treylon Burks |
| LT | 75 | Dan Moore Jr. | 71 | Jaelyn Duncan |
| LG | 77 | Peter Skoronski | 72 | Olisaemeka Udoh |
| C | 79 | Lloyd Cushenberry III | 60 | Sam Mustipher |
| RG | 70 | Kevin Zeitler | 64 | Jackson Slater (R) |
| RT | 55 | JC Latham | 73 | Blake Hance |
| TE | 85 | Chig Okonkwo | 84 | Gunnar Helm (R) |
| QB | 1 | Cam Ward (R) | 8 | Will Levis |
| RB | 20 | Tony Pollard | 2 | Tyjae Spears |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 69 | Sebastian Joseph-Day | 72 | Cam Horsley (R) |
| NT | 93 | T'Vondre Sweat | 91 | Keondre Coburn |
| DT | 98 | Jeffery Simmons | 94 | Abdullah Anderson |
| OLB | 53 | Oluwafemi Oladejo (R) | 49 | Arden Key |
| ILB | 50 | Cody Barton | 41 | Otis Reese IV |
| ILB | 51 | Cedric Gray | 52 | James Williams |
| OLB | 45 | Dre'Mont Jones | 54 | Lorenzo Carter |
| CB | 29 | Jarvis Brownlee Jr. | 39 | Darrell Baker Jr. |
| CB | 38 | L'Jarius Sneed | 21 | Roger McCreary |
| S | 37 | Amani Hooker | 23 | Kevin Winston Jr. (R) |
| S | 25 | Xavier Woods | 44 | Mike Brown |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 6 | Joey Slye | KR | 17 | Chimere Dike (R) |
| P | 3 | Johnny Hekker | PR | 17 | Chimere Dike (R) |

**16.8%**

A league-high 16.8% of Titans drives ended via turnover, almost a full percentage point ahead of the second-place Browns.

## TITANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Cam Ward | QB | 6-2 | 219 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 2 | Oluwafemi Oladejo | OLB | 6-3 | 259 | UCLA |
| 3 | Kevin Winston Jr. | S | 6-2 | 213 | Penn State |
| 4 | Chimere Dike | WR | 6-1 | 196 | Florida |
| 4 | Gunnar Helm | TE | 6-5 | 241 | Texas |
| 4 | Elic Ayomanor | WR | 6-2 | 206 | Stanford |
| 5 | Jackson Slater | G | 6-3 | 311 | Sacramento State |
| 6 | Marcus Harris | CB | 5-11 | 188 | Cal |
| 6 | Kalel Mullings | RB | 6-2 | 226 | Michigan |

Cam Ward is the new face of the franchise, but much of the rest of the Titans' draft was about upside more than immediate impact. Chimere Dike and Elic Ayomanor give Ward some speed in a weak receiver room, and Gunnar Helm is a promising target and blocker. Oluwafemi Oladejo was just moved from inside linebacker during last season, so he's got a lot of growing to do. The Titans said that Kevin Winston Jr. would have been a high second-rounder but for an ACL injury in 2024. Marcus Harris will offer insurance for injured and troubled cornerback L'Jarius Sneed. Kalel Mullings was a linebacker not too long ago, and he brings a physical style that's a nice complement to Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears.

# BRONCOS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Tennessee | 4:05 |
| Sept. 14 | at Indianapolis | 4:05 |
| Sept. 21 | at L.A. Chargers | 4:05 |
| Sept. 29 | Cincinnati | 8:15 |
| Oct. 5 | at Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | N.Y. Jets (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 19 | N.Y. Giants | 4:05 |
| Oct. 26 | Dallas | 4:25 |
| Nov. 2 | at Houston | 1:00 |
| Nov. 6 | Las Vegas | 8:15 |
| Nov. 16 | Kansas City | 4:25 |
| Nov. 23 | BYE | |
| Nov. 30 | at Washington | 8:20 |
| Dec. 7 | at Las Vegas | 4:05 |
| Dec. 14 | Green Bay | 4:25 |
| Dec. 21 | Jacksonville | 4:05 |
| Dec. 25 | at Kansas City | 8:15 |
| TBD | L.A. Chargers | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 5 |
| 2021 | 7 |
| 2022 | 5 |
| 2023 | 8 |
| 2024 AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Sean Payton
**Record With Team:** 18-16
**Career Record:** 170-105
**Offensive Coordinator:** Joe Lombardi
**Defensive Coordinator:** Vance Joseph
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Darren Rizzi
**Offensive Pass Game Coordinator/ Quarterbacks:** Davis Webb
**Running Backs:** Lou Ayeni
**Wide Receivers:** Keary Colbert
**Tight Ends:** Austin King
**Offensive Run Game Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach:** Zach Strief
**Defensive Line:** Jamar Cain
**Linebackers:** Isaac Shewmaker
**Cornerbacks:** Addison Lynch
**Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/ Assistant Head Coach:** Jim Leonhard

AFC WEST FORECAST
2

The Broncos' 14th different starting quarterback since Peyton Manning delivered 10 wins, ending an eight-year playoff drought. Drafting Bo Nix changed everything for the Broncos. The ground has stopped shifting under the franchise's feet. Ownership, general manager George Paton, head coach Sean Payton and Nix are in place and aligned. The Broncos are relevant again.

Now comes the hard part: showing it was not a fluke. Denver took an interesting posture this offseason, beefing up an already strong defense as a way to usurp the Kansas City Chiefs in the AFC West. With the salary cap burden from departed Russell Wilson's contract whittled down to $32 million, the Broncos signed linebacker Dre Greenlaw, safety Talanoa Hufanga and tight end Evan Engram, moves designed to win in the middle of the field, a glaring weakness for this team since winning Super Bowl 50.

Nix has changed the mood; now, can he execute the next step of this upward move? He needed more weapons, meaning the onus is on Payton's scheme to turn this team into a contender capable of hosting and winning a playoff game.

## OFFENSE

It only took one person to Bo-lieve. When Payton conducted Nix's private workout before the 2024 draft, his mind was made up. This was the quarterback capable of returning the Broncos to the postseason. After a clunky first month, Nix exceeded expectations, posting 29 touchdowns with 12 interceptions.

And now Payton knows what he has in him. Nix is a leader, a player he can trust to protect the ball, to make every throw and to use his legs as a weapon in the run game. Nix ranked fifth in dropbacks, so added pressure and new wrinkles in the offense should not affect him.

The addition of Engram will make his job easier. A Joker player — Payton's lingo for a hybrid capable of creating mismatches in space — Engram will be counted on to provide yards after contact and explosive plays.

Last season, Nix only trusted Courtland Sutton to make contested catches and win on third down. As defenses focus on taking away Sutton, Nix must spread the ball around, which could mean more targets for Marvin Mims Jr., who emerged as a deep threat and gadget option over the season's final month, to keep defenses honest. Second-year pro Devaughn Vele is in line for a bigger role as a possession receiver.

The passing game will only receive a bump if the running game becomes more reliable. Javonte Williams' 513 yards were the fewest ever for a leading rusher in Payton's 17 seasons as a head coach. The Broncos believe they addressed the issue by drafting RJ Harvey, a bowling ball from UCF. But it is fair to question if they did enough given the thin résumés in the running back room. Audric Estime remains an X-factor, capable of sharing duties if he shows that his fumbling issues are behind him. He is needed to grind out the tough yards this team could not get last season, while creating additional play-action opportunities for Nix.

Spearheaded by All-Pro left guard Quinn Meinerz, Denver returns all five starters along its offensive line. The group consistently won in run blocking, but it needs a running back to take advantage with better vision and the ability to make at least one defender miss. Without better work on the ground, it will be difficult for Nix to improve on last season because Payton will ask him to do too much.

**BO NIX**
QUARTERBACK

RON CHENOY-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

The Broncos defense ascended from the dregs of the NFL in September 2023 to one of the league's best units by the end of last season. Equipped with more weapons, coordinator Vance Joseph will be able to go full throttle, adding more blitzes from corners and safeties while blending in more confusing coverages.

Greenlaw gives Denver its first sideline-to-sideline linebacker since Danny Trevathan in 2015. When the Broncos were overmatched, they lost in the triangle in the middle of the field. Ferocious-hitting safety Hufanga will pair with Brandon Jones to create better range and more gator arms from receivers. With the return of inside linebacker Alex Singleton from ACL surgery, the defense returns all of its best players.

The group is fundamentally sound, and everything changed when it began stopping the run. Defensive end John Franklin-Myers and tackle Malcolm Roach make it challenging to double nose tackle D.J. Jones and end Zach Allen, who emerged as a game-wrecker because of his ability to create inside pressure.

There is no Von Miller, but the Broncos feature the reigning Defensive Player of the Year in cornerback Pat Surtain II and second-team All-Pro edge rusher Nik Bonitto, whose remarkable jump in his third season helped Denver deliver a league-best 63 sacks.

Surtain puts a Do Not Disturb sign on the opponent's best receiver. And he will get more chances to make plays with the addition of dynamic first-round pick Jahdae Barron, whose versatility will create favorable matchups. This is the best secondary since the No Fly Zone of Chris Harris Jr., Aqib Talib, T.J. Ward and Darian Stewart anchored the Super Bowl 50 team. Barron is expected to compete with — if not beat out — slot corner Ja'Quan McMillian in the only position battle. Riley Moss has the spot opposite Surtain secured if he shows that he is fully recovered from last year's knee issue. If McMillian is used exclusively in the dime, it will reveal why this defense is poised to cash in on its best performance in a decade.

## SPECIALISTS

Sean Payton fired special teams coordinator Ben Kotwica, replacing him with longtime New Orleans Saints assistant Darren Rizzi. Mims earned All-Pro honors in 2024, leading the league with 15.7 yards per punt return, and he remained a factor, though limited, on kickoffs. Placekicker Wil Lutz ranks among the league's best. He converted 31-of-34 field-goal attempts last season, including five of at least 50 yards. But the Broncos will break in a new punter, with rookie Jeremy Crawshaw replacing the inconsistent Riley Dixon.

There is no excuse for Denver not ranking near the top of the punting statistics with half its games at altitude.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

In his third season, Payton is not interested in waiting. Why chip to the green when you can break out the driver? Payton believes the Broncos are ready to contend for a division title, ending the Chiefs' nine-year stranglehold on the AFC West. What you hear now is that the Broncos snuck up on teams, that Nix has reached his ceiling, that they benefited from a soft schedule, waxing the NFC South. Well, here's why 10 wins is the new floor: Nix will improve, his running a catalytic force in the ground game, and the defense is the team's best in a decade. The Broncos are no longer irrelevant but instead are poised to win their first playoff game since smashing the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50.

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Seattle | L | 20-26 |
| Sept. | 15 | Pittsburgh | L | 6-13 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Tampa Bay | W | 26-7 |
| Sept. | 29 | at N.Y. Jets | W | 10-9 |
| Oct. | 6 | Las Vegas | W | 34-18 |
| Oct. | 13 | L.A. Chargers | L | 16-23 |
| Oct. | 17 | at New Orleans | W | 33-10 |
| Oct. | 27 | Carolina | W | 28-14 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Baltimore | L | 10-41 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Kansas City | L | 14-16 |
| Nov. | 17 | Atlanta | W | 38-6 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Las Vegas | W | 29-19 |
| Dec. | 2 | Cleveland | W | 41-32 |
| Dec. | 15 | Indianapolis | W | 31-13 |
| Dec. | 19 | at L.A. Chargers | L | 27-34 |
| Dec. | 28 | at Cincinnati (ot) | L | 24-30 |
| Jan. | 5 | Kansas City | W | 38-0 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | at Buffalo | L | 7-31 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 324.6 | 19 | 7 |
| Rushing | 112.2 | 16 | 7 |
| Passing | 212.4 | 20 | 9 |
| Scoring | 25.0 | 10 | 4 |
| Third Down % | 39.6 | 13 | 6 |
| Points/Play | 0.394 | 9 | 4 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 317.1 | 7 | 5 |
| Rushing | 96.4 | 3 | 2 |
| Passing | 220.7 | 19 | 10 |
| Scoring | 18.3 | 3 | 2 |
| Interceptions | 15 | T8 | T4 |
| Sacks | 63 | 1 | 1 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.294 | 1 | 1 |
| TO Differential | +6 | T10 | T5 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bo Nix | 567 | 376 | 3,775 | 29 | 12 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Javonte Williams | 139 | 513 | 3.7 | 4 |
| Jaleel McLaughlin | 113 | 496 | 4.4 | 1 |
| Bo Nix | 92 | 430 | 4.7 | 4 |
| Audric Estime | 76 | 310 | 4.1 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Courtland Sutton | 81 | 1,081 | 13.3 | 8 |
| Javonte Williams | 52 | 346 | 6.7 | 0 |
| Devaughn Vele | 41 | 475 | 11.6 | 3 |
| Marvin Mims Jr. | 39 | 503 | 12.9 | 6 |
| Lil'Jordan Humphrey | 31 | 293 | 9.5 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Wil Lutz, 31-34 FGs, 46-46 PATs, 139 points
**TACKLES:** Brandon Jones, 115; Cody Barton, 106
**SACKS:** Nik Bonitto, 13.5; Jonathon Cooper, 10.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Pat Surtain II, 4; Brandon Jones, 3

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**MAN OF THE PEOPLE** As Bo Nix's successful rookie season ended, quarterbacks coach Davis Webb instructed his pupil to become a man of the people. He told him to go to some games, enjoy the city. Nix and his wife, Izzy, along with multiple teammates, attended several Denver Nuggets and Colorado Avalanche games, delighting the crowd when his face was shown on the Jumbotron.

ERIC HARTLINE-IMAGN IMAGES

**NO ONE'S LAUGHING AT JOKER** Head coach Sean Payton talked so much about getting a "Joker," if felt like he was directing a new "Batman" movie. A Joker is a hybrid player who can create mismatches in space. Payton finally filled the position, signing free-agent tight end **Evan Engram**, keeping him away from the division rival Los Angeles Chargers. "He is someone who has those skill sets. One of the things that helped us in the process of him making that decision was that role," Payton says.

**GOLD RUSH** Coordinator Vance Joseph gave the Broncos defense an edge last season, adopting an aggressive, downhill mindset. Denver led the NFL with 63 sacks, nine more than any other team, and figures to be even more menacing this season with free-agent additions in safety Talanoa Hufanga and linebacker Dre Greenlaw. "Those two fit our style of play. That's so important, to find the right fit. It is exciting," Joseph says.

**PENNER ALWAYS PUSHING** CEO and owner Greg Penner was pleased that the Broncos reached the playoffs for the first time since Super Bowl 50. But he is hardly satisfied. He and fellow owner Carrie Walton Penner continue to seek ways for the team to improve. "What you don't want to do is get stuck in actions that you are taking that aren't working and saying we are going to keep doing those actions because 'that's the way we have always done it,'" Penner says. "Usually it's not the way you have always done it. I can't stand that."

# SCOUTING THE BRONCOS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DENVER

"Sean Payton has truly galvanized this franchise with his innovations and leadership. He's been a great hire. A lot of people thought George Paton was on borrowed time when Sean got hired. Instead, they've built a good working relationship. … For a 'system quarterback,' I'd simply call Bo Nix a good, winning quarterback. Give them credit. They had a specific vision for him and how he would fit what they wanted to do offensively, and he's fit like a glove. … I like the downhill style of RJ Harvey. They spent a lot of time looking at all of the top running backs. Ultimately, I think his power is going to push his game over the top. … Courtland Sutton has been the subject of so many trade rumors, but moving him never made sense. … Marvin Mims Jr. has got it all: speed, smooth routes, good hands and return skills. … This is a pretty solid offensive line. They're all lunchpail guys, especially Garett Bolles and Quinn Meinerz. Hard to teach toughness; they've got it already. … Pat Bryant is a sharp pattern runner. … Dre Greenlaw is already hurt. They spent a lot of money on him, too. He's not a great locker room guy, either. This isn't off to a positive start. … Front seven individually doesn't have a lot of stars, but, collectively, they're really solid. … No better corner than Pat Surtain II, including Derek Stingley Jr. That's why Pat makes the big bucks. … I like the Talanoa Hufanga signing a lot. His pursuit angles and tackling are all in the plus category. … Brandon Jones' speed and reactions are all above average."

## 2025 BRONCOS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ehlinger, Sam | QB | 6-2 | 225 | 4 | Texas | FA-Ind-25 | D6-Ind-21 |
| 10 | Nix, Bo | QB | 6-2 | 217 | 1 | Oregon | D1-24 | D1-Den-24 |
| 8 | Stidham, Jarrett | QB | 6-3 | 215 | 6 | Auburn | FA-LV-23 | D4b-NE-19 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Badie, Tyler | RB | 5-8 | 194 | 3 | Missouri | PS-Bal-22 | D6-Bal-22 |
| 20 | Burton, Michael | FB | 5-11 | 242 | 10 | Rutgers | FA-KC-23 | D5-Det-15 |
| 23 | Estime, Audric | RB | 5-11 | 227 | 1 | Notre Dame | D5b-24 | D5b-Den-24 |
| 38 | McLaughlin, Jaleel | RB | 5-9 | 183 | 2 | Youngstown State | FA-23 | FA-Den-23 |
| 25 | Watson, Blake | RB | 5-9 | 195 | 1 | Memphis | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 45 | Adkins, Nate | TE | 6-3 | 252 | 2 | South Carolina | FA-23 | FA-Den-23 |
| 83 | Bandy, Michael | WR | 5-10 | 190 | 4 | San Diego | FA-LAC-23 | FA-LAC-21 |
| 1 | Engram, Evan | TE | 6-3 | 240 | 8 | Ole Miss | FA-Jac-25 | D1-NYG-17 |
| | Fotherington, Cole | TE | 6-4 | 246 | 3 | Utah | FA-25 | FA-LV-22 |
| 16 | Franklin, Troy | WR | 6-3 | 187 | 1 | Oregon | D4-24 | D4-Den-24 |
| 85 | Krull, Lucas | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 3 | Pitt | FA-23 | FA-NO-22 |
| 19 | Mims Jr., Marvin | WR | 5-11 | 184 | 2 | Oklahoma | D2-23 | D2-Den-23 |
| 87 | Perry, A.T. | WR | 6-5 | 205 | 2 | Wake Forest | FA-24 | D6-NO-23 |
| 5 | Sherfield Sr., Trent | WR | 6-1 | 206 | 7 | Vanderbilt | FA-Min-25 | FA-Ari-18 |
| 14 | Sutton, Courtland | WR | 6-4 | 216 | 7 | SMU | D2-18 | D2-Den-18 |
| 82 | Trautman, Adam | TE | 6-5 | 253 | 5 | Dayton | T-NO-23 | D3b-NO-20 |
| 17 | Vele, Devaughn | WR | 6-5 | 210 | 1 | Utah | D7a-24 | D7a-Den-24 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72 | Bolles, Garett | T | 6-5 | 300 | 8 | Utah | D1-17 | D1-Den-17 |
| 73 | Crum, Frank | T | 6-7 | 315 | 1 | Wyoming | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 54 | Forsyth, Alex | C | 6-4 | 312 | 2 | Oregon | D7-23 | D7-Den-23 |
| 66 | Gargiulo, Nick | G | 6-5 | 327 | 1 | South Carolina | D7b-24 | D7b-Den-24 |
| 69 | McGlinchey, Mike | T | 6-8 | 310 | 7 | Notre Dame | FA-SF-23 | D1-SF-18 |
| 77 | Meinerz, Quinn | G | 6-3 | 320 | 4 | Wisc.-Whitewater | D3a-21 | D3a-Den-21 |
| 63 | Palczewski, Alex | T | 6-6 | 315 | 2 | Illinois | FA-23 | FA-Den-23 |
| 79 | Peart, Matt | T | 6-7 | 315 | 5 | UConn | FA-NYG-24 | D3-NYG-20 |
| 74 | Powers, Ben | G | 6-4 | 338 | 6 | Oklahoma | FA-Bal-23 | D4b-Bal-19 |
| 78 | Sherman, Will | G | 6-4 | 300 | 3 | Colorado | FA-25 | D6-NE-21 |
| 76 | Throckmorton, Calvin | G | 6-5 | 311 | 5 | Oregon | FA-Ten-24 | FA-NO-20 |
| 60 | Wattenberg, Luke | C | 6-5 | 300 | 3 | Washington | D5c-22 | D5c-Den-22 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 99 | Allen, Zach | DL | 6-4 | 281 | 6 | Boston College | FA-Ari-23 | D3-Ari-19 |
| 98 | Franklin-Myers, John | DL | 6-4 | 288 | 7 | Stephen F. Austin | T-NYJ-24 | D4-LAR-18 |
| 91 | Henningsen, Matt | DL | 6-3 | 291 | 3 | Wisconsin | D6-22 | D6-Den-22 |
| 94 | Jackson, Jordan | DL | 6-5 | 285 | 1 | Air Force | FA-23 | D6-NO-22 |
| 93 | Jones, D.J. | DT | 6-0 | 305 | 8 | Ole Miss | FA-SF-22 | D6a-SF-17 |
| 90 | Miller, Jordan | NT | 6-3 | 307 | 1 | SMU | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 97 | Roach, Malcolm | DT | 6-3 | 290 | 5 | Texas | FA-NO-24 | FA-NO-20 |
| 96 | Uwazurike, Eyioma | DL | 6-6 | 320 | 2 | Iowa State | D4b-22 | D4b-Den-22 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56 | Bailey, Levelle | ILB | 6-2 | 225 | 1 | Fresno State | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 15 | Bonitto, Nik | OLB | 6-3 | 240 | 3 | Oklahoma | D2-22 | D2-Den-22 |
| 0 | Cooper, Jonathon | OLB | 6-4 | 257 | 4 | Ohio State | D7b-21 | D7b-Den-21 |
| 52 | Elliss, Jonah | OLB | 6-2 | 246 | 1 | Utah | D3-24 | D3-Den-24 |
| 53 | Farmer II, Andrew | OLB | 6-4 | 250 | 2 | Lane | FA-23 | FA-LAC-23 |
| 57 | Greenlaw, Dre | LB | 6-0 | 230 | 6 | Arkansas | FA-SF-25 | D5-SF-19 |
| 41 | Sanders, Drew | LB | 6-5 | 233 | 2 | Arkansas | D3a-23 | D3a-Den-23 |
| 49 | Singleton, Alex | ILB | 6-2 | 240 | 6 | Montana State | FA-Phi-22 | FA-Sea-15 |
| 40 | Strnad, Justin | ILB | 6-3 | 235 | 5 | Wake Forest | D5-20 | D5-Den-20 |
| 92 | Tillman, Dondrea | OLB | 6-4 | 247 | 1 | Indiana (Penn.) | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | Abrams-Draine, Kris | CB | 5-11 | 178 | 1 | Missouri | D5a-24 | D5a-Den-24 |
| 42 | Franklin Jr., Sam | S | 6-3 | 210 | 5 | Temple | FA-Car-25 | FA-Car-20 |
| 9 | Hufanga, Talanoa | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | USC | FA-SF-25 | D5c-SF-21 |
| 22 | Jones, Brandon | S | 6-1 | 190 | 5 | Texas | FA-Mia-24 | D3-Mia-20 |
| 26 | Key, Devon | S | 6-0 | 208 | 2 | WKU | FA-22 | FA-KC-21 |
| 6 | Locke, P.J. | S | 5-10 | 202 | 5 | Texas | FA-19 | FA-Pit-19 |
| 27 | Mathis, Damarri | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 3 | Pitt | D4a-22 | D4a-Den-22 |
| 30 | McCalister, Tanner | DB | 5-11 | 191 | 2 | Ohio State | FA-24 | FA-Cle-23 |
| 29 | McMillian, Ja'Quan | CB | 5-10 | 183 | 3 | East Carolina | FA-22 | FA-Den-22 |
| 21 | Moss, Riley | CB | 6-1 | 193 | 2 | Iowa | D3b-23 | D3b-Den-23 |
| 36 | Newsome, Quinton | CB | 6-1 | 185 | 1 | Nebraska | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 34 | Skinner, JL | S | 6-4 | 220 | 2 | Boise State | D6-23 | D6-Den-23 |
| 43 | Smith, Keidron | DB | 6-2 | 201 | 1 | Kentucky | FA-23 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 2 | Surtain II, Pat | CB | 6-2 | 202 | 4 | Alabama | D1-21 | D1-Den-21 |
| 35 | Taylor, Reese | CB | 5-10 | 188 | 1 | Purdue | FA-23 | FA-KC-23 |
| 32 | Turner-Yell, Delarrin | S | 5-11 | 200 | 3 | Oklahoma | D5a-22 | D5a-Den-22 |
| 39 | Wallace, Levi | CB | 6-0 | 179 | 7 | Alabama | FA-Pit-24 | FA-Buf-18 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | Fraboni, Mitchell | LS | 6-2 | 223 | 3 | Arizona State | FA-22 | FA-Hou-21 |
| 3 | Lutz, Wil | K | 5-11 | 184 | 9 | Georgia State | T-NO-23 | FA-Bal-16 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 14 | Courtland Sutton | 16 | Troy Franklin |
| WR | 19 | Marvin Mims Jr. | 13 | Pat Bryant (R) |
| WR | 17 | Devaughn Vele | 5 | Trent Sherfield Sr. |
| LT | 72 | Garett Bolles | 79 | Matt Peart |
| LG | 74 | Ben Powers | 76 | Calvin Throckmorton |
| C | 60 | Luke Wattenberg | 54 | Alex Forsyth |
| RG | 77 | Quinn Meinerz | 66 | Nick Gargiulo |
| RT | 69 | Mike McGlinchey | 63 | Alex Palczewski |
| TE | 1 | Evan Engram | 82 | Adam Trautman |
| QB | 10 | Bo Nix | 8 | Jarrett Stidham |
| RB | 23 | Audric Estime | 37 | RJ Harvey (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 99 | Zach Allen | 95 | Sai'vion Jones (R) |
| NT | 93 | D.J. Jones | 97 | Malcolm Roach |
| DE | 98 | John Franklin-Myers | 94 | Jordan Jackson |
| OLB | 0 | Jonathon Cooper | 52 | Jonah Elliss |
| ILB | 49 | Alex Singleton | 41 | Drew Sanders |
| ILB | 57 | Dre Greenlaw | 40 | Justin Strnad |
| OLB | 15 | Nik Bonitto | 92 | Dondrea Tillman |
| CB | 21 | Riley Moss | 12 | Jahdae Barron (R) |
| CB | 2 | Pat Surtain II | 29 | Ja'Quan McMillian |
| SS | 22 | Brandon Jones | 6 | P.J. Locke |
| FS | 9 | Talanoa Hufanga | 26 | Devon Key |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 3 | Wil Lutz | PR | 19 | Marvin Mims Jr. |
| P | 39 | Jeremy Crawshaw (R) | KR | 19 | Marvin Mims Jr. |

## 24.9%

Bo Nix was pressured on just 24.9% of his dropbacks per NFL Next Gen Stats, the second-lowest rate in the NFL. Tua Tagovailoa was the only qualified quarterback with a lower pressure rate.

## BRONCOS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jahdae Barron | CB | 5-11 | 200 | Texas |
| 2 | RJ Harvey | RB | 5-8 | 205 | UCF |
| 3 | Pat Bryant | WR | 6-2 | 204 | Illinois |
| 3 | Sai'vion Jones | DE | 6-5 | 289 | LSU |
| 4 | Que Robinson | Edge | 6-4 | 243 | Alabama |
| 6 | Jeremy Crawshaw | P | 6-3 | 205 | Florida |
| 7 | Caleb Lohner | TE | 6-7 | 250 | Utah |

The Broncos surprised everyone by going with a cornerback in the first round. They were simply unable to pass up Jahdae Barron, a player they ranked in the top 10, in that spot. His ability to play all over the field will free up Pat Surtain II to follow top receivers more in coverage. However, the lack of aggressiveness in pursuing a running back and tight end by trading up was a disappointment. The onus is on RJ Harvey to caffeinate one of the league's most underwhelming ground games, while proving he can transition quickly as a receiver. The only rookie in line to start is punter Jeremy Crawshaw.

# KC CHIEFS

AFC WEST FORECAST

**1**

Everybody knows the standard in Kansas City since Patrick Mahomes' ascendance in 2018. The worst finish the Chiefs have had in Mahomes' seven seasons as a starter came in AFC Championship Game overtime losses. Every other season has ended in the Super Bowl. After the chance at a historic three-peat slipped through Kansas City's grasp last season, only one goal will satisfy Mahomes, head coach Andy Reid and Chiefs Kingdom — a crack at Super Bowl LX. Tight end Travis Kelce is entering the final year of his contract and perhaps his career, so Kansas City will be highly motivated to send the franchise legend and future Hall of Famer out in style — if he is, indeed, ready to step away.

## OFFENSE

Mahomes was sacked a career-high 36 times last season — plus 11 more times in the playoffs, including six in the Super Bowl — so it's no surprise that the Chiefs addressed the offensive line in the offseason. All-Pro center Creed Humphrey is locked in long-term, and Kansas City used the franchise tag on right guard Trey Smith, aiming for a long-term deal as well. That meant salary-cap considerations forced the Chiefs to trade left guard Joe Thuney, who moved to left tackle late in 2024. Thuney's departure is a big loss in terms of talent and leadership, but the math said it was necessary. Kingsley Suamataia — a second-round pick in 2024 who was handed the left tackle job in training camp last season and couldn't lock it down — is expected to bounce inside and compete with Mike Caliendo as Thuney's successor. To solve the left tackle problem, the Chiefs signed former 49ers backup Jaylon Moore (two years, $30 million) and drafted Ohio State's Josh Simmons in the first round, while Jawaan Taylor returns at right tackle. Is it enough? Kansas City hopes so in an AFC West filled with ascending teams.

Mahomes hasn't topped 30 touchdown passes since 2022, but he's got enough weapons to blow past that milestone — if the receiver group can stay healthy. Hollywood Brown missed most of 2024 with a broken collarbone suffered on the first play of the preseason, and Rashee Rice, who could face a suspension for his March 2024 hit-and-run car crash in Dallas, suffered a season-ending knee injury in Week 4 last season. Both return, along with second-year speedster Xavier Worthy, who scored nine touchdowns as a rookie, and veteran JuJu Smith-Schuster.

Kansas City also added a big-play threat in Jalen Royals, a value pick in the fourth round. With Mecole Hardman Jr. now in Green Bay, Royals and Worthy will get reps in Reid's gadget role and as possible downfield threats to rekindle Kansas City's missing big-play offense. In 2024, Kelce had a down year by his legendary standard — though he still had 97 catches for 823 yards — but Noah Gray had a career year, including five touchdowns, to bring balance to the Chiefs' tight-end production. If Mahomes is protected and the pass-catchers are healthy, the passing game could be elite.

Seventh-round running back Brashard Smith, who ran a 4.39-second 40-yard dash at the NFL Scouting Combine, brings much-needed speed and athleticism to the backfield, but he's not a three-down back. Veterans Isiah Pacheco and Kareem Hunt return to a running-back group that needs to improve on its 3.7 yards per carry average from last season. Kansas City also added former San Francisco 49er Elijah Mitchell via free agency to round out the patchwork backfield.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 5 | L.A. Chargers (São Paulo) | 8:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Philadelphia | 4:25 |
| Sept. 21 | at N.Y. Giants | 8:20 |
| Sept. 28 | Baltimore | 4:25 |
| Oct. 6 | at Jacksonville | 8:15 |
| Oct. 12 | Detroit | 8:20 |
| Oct. 19 | Las Vegas | 1:00 |
| Oct. 27 | Washington | 8:15 |
| Nov. 2 | at Buffalo | 4:25 |
| Nov. 9 | BYE | |
| Nov. 16 | at Denver | 4:25 |
| Nov. 23 | Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Nov. 27 | at Dallas | 4:30 |
| Dec. 7 | Houston | 8:20 |
| Dec. 14 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Dec. 25 | Denver | 8:15 |
| TBD | at Las Vegas | |

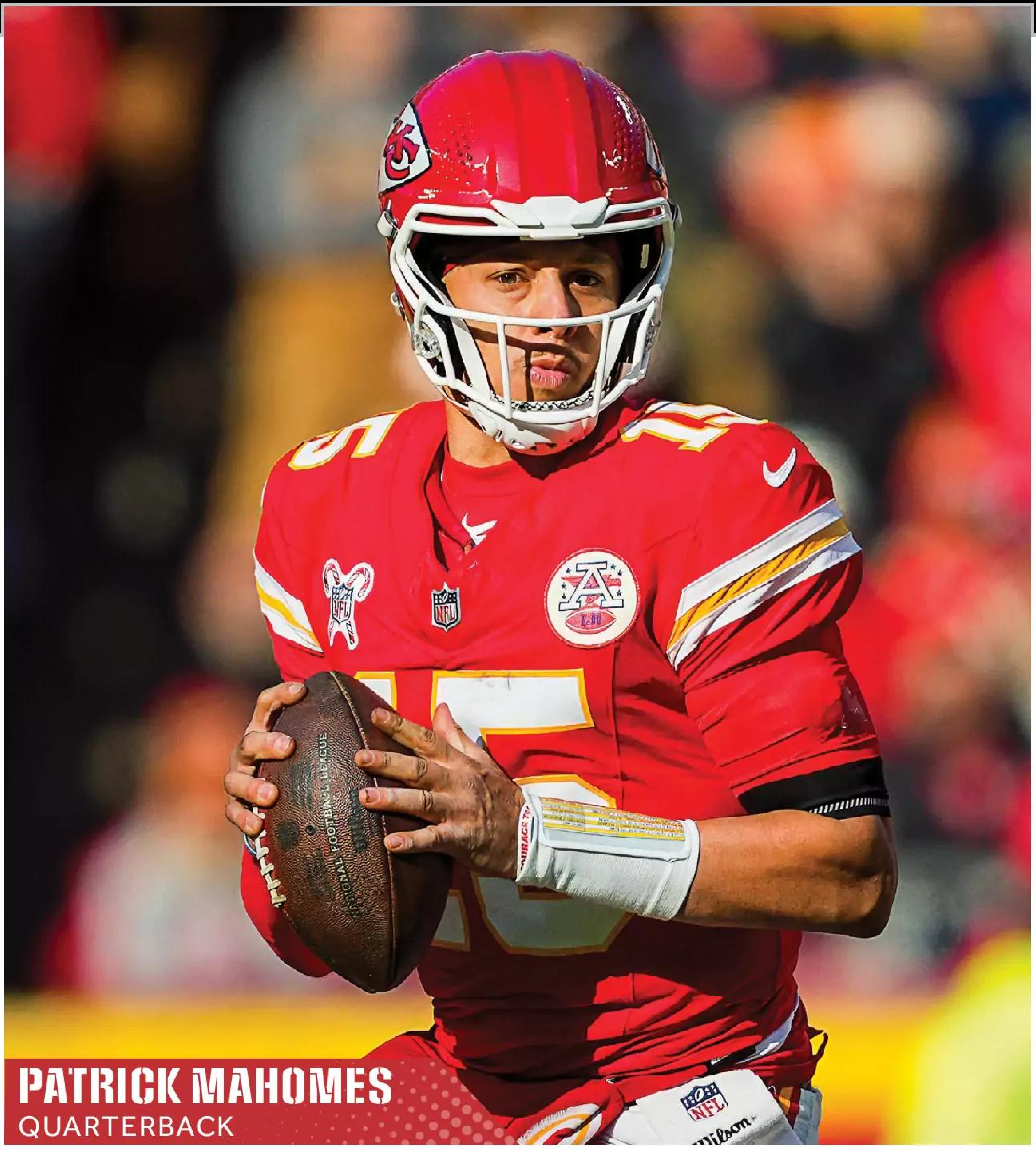
*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 14 |
| 2021 | AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 12 |
| 2022 | SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 14 |
| 2023 | SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 11 |
| 2024 | SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP | 15 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Andy Reid
**Record With Team:** 143-53
**Career Record:** 273-146-1
**Offensive Coordinator:** Matt Nagy
**Defensive Coordinator:** Steve Spagnuolo
**Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator:** Dave Toub
**Quarterbacks:** David Girardi
**Pass Game Coordinator:** Joe Bleymaier
**Running Backs:** Todd Pinkston
**Wide Receivers:** Connor Embree
**Tight Ends:** Tom Melvin
**Offensive Line:** Andy Heck
**Defensive Line:** Joe Cullen
**Linebackers:** Brendan Daly
**Outside Linebackers:** Rod Wilson
**Defensive Backs:** Dave Merritt



**PATRICK MAHOMES**
QUARTERBACK

## DEFENSE

It's surprising that coordinator Steve Spagnuolo, who has built a consistent championship-caliber defense in his six seasons with Kansas City, hasn't garnered more attention as a head-coaching candidate, but the Chiefs aren't complaining. Just as on offense, Kansas City's offseason focus on defense was the line. Game-wrecking tackle Chris Jones and hard-nosed end George Karlaftis, who combined for 48 QB hits last season, bring star power to the position group, while end Mike Danna and tackle Mike Pennel bring a steady, veteran presence to the rotation. The Chiefs also re-signed end Charles Omenihu, added veteran tackle Jerry Tillery to replace Tershawn Wharton and hope 2023 first-round pick Felix Anudike-Uzomah makes a leap at end. But Kansas City will be counting on second-round pick Omarr Norman-Lott, an undersized but quick pass-rushing tackle from Tennessee, and relentless third-round end Ashton Gillotte, who had 26.5 sacks in 51 career games at Louisville, to force their way into the rotation. Kansas City boasted top-five league-wide knockdown and pressure rates last season, but it translated to middling sack production, which the Chiefs would love to change.

Linebacker Nick Bolton, who handles play-calling duties as Spagnuolo's eyes and ears on the field, re-signed on a three-year, $45 million deal. He's an instinctive playmaker and leads a linebacking corps that includes Drue Tranquill and Leo Chenal. The room got a much-needed injection of athleticism with fifth-round pick Jeffrey Bassa. He figures to make an impact on special teams immediately, but the converted safety also could help in coverage sub-packages, especially against elite tight ends or receiving backs.

Speaking of coverage, signing veteran cornerback Kristian Fulton and moving up to get third-round corner Nohl Williams beefed up the Chiefs' secondary along the boundary. Kansas City also has veterans Jaylen Watson, Joshua Williams and Nazeeh Johnson in the mix outside. That should allow Trent McDuffie to move back into the slot, where he was an All-Pro in 2023, and free up Chamarri Conner to be Spagnuolo's defensive-back Swiss army knife. One of the biggest adjustments for the Chiefs will be losing Justin Reid on the back end. It looks like second-year safety Jaden Hicks' job to lose. He flashed immense potential as a rookie. Kansas City will hope safety Bryan Cook, who is in the final year of his rookie deal, steps up along with Conner, while veterans Mike Edwards and Deon Bush provide depth.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-IMAGN IMAGES

## SPECIALISTS

Wide receiver Nikko Remigio emerged as Kansas City's primary return specialist last season. He's the front-runner heading to camp, especially after Hardman signed with the Packers, but two draft picks — cornerback Williams and running back Smith — will get extended looks in return roles. Otherwise, the Chiefs return some familiar faces. Long-snapper James Winchester, the second-longest-tenured player on the roster behind Kelce, is back for his 11th season, and placekicker Harrison Butker returns for his ninth in Kansas City. Punter Matt Araiza led the NFL in touchbacks (nine) and posted a pedestrian net punting average as a rookie, so he'll have to fend off a challenge a fellow Ray Guy Award winner, undrafted rookie Eddie Czaplicki from USC.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Kansas City has owned the AFC West for nine consecutive seasons, but Denver will be a trendy pick to end that streak in Sean Payton's third season. If not the Broncos, the Justin Herbert-led Los Angeles Chargers are due some hype in Jim Harbaugh's second season, right? Heck, even the Las Vegas Raiders enter 2025 with a Super Bowl-champion head coach (Pete Carroll) and a non-journeyman quarterback (Geno Smith). There will be no shortage of pundits lining up to predict the fall of the Chiefs — perhaps with good cause after that Super Bowl dud to end last season. But bet against Mahomes, Reid and the rest of Kansas City's battle-tested, proud organization at your own risk.

## 2024 RESULTS (15-2)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 5 | Baltimore | W | 27-20 |
| Sept. | 15 | Cincinnati | W | 26-25 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Atlanta | W | 22-17 |
| Sept. | 29 | at L.A. Chargers | W | 17-10 |
| Oct. | 7 | New Orleans | W | 26-13 |
| Oct. | 20 | at San Francisco | W | 28-18 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Las Vegas | W | 27-20 |
| Nov. | 4 | Tampa Bay (ot) | W | 30-24 |
| Nov. | 10 | Denver | W | 16-14 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Buffalo | L | 21-30 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Carolina | W | 30-27 |
| Nov. | 29 | Las Vegas | W | 19-17 |
| Dec. | 8 | L.A. Chargers | W | 19-17 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Cleveland | W | 21-7 |
| Dec. | 21 | Houston | W | 27-19 |
| Dec. | 25 | at Pittsburgh | W | 29-10 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Denver | L | 0-38 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 18 | Houston | W | 23-14 |
| Jan. | 26 | Buffalo | W | 32-29 |
| Feb. | 9 | Philadelphia | L | 22-40 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 327.6 | 16 | 5 |
| Rushing | 105.3 | 22 | 11 |
| Passing | 222.4 | 14 | 5 |
| Scoring | 22.6 | 15 | 6 |
| Third Down % | 48.5 | 2 | 1 |
| Points/Play | 0.369 | 14 | 6 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 320.6 | 9 | 6 |
| Rushing | 101.8 | 8 | 4 |
| Passing | 218.8 | 18 | 9 |
| Scoring | 19.2 | 4 | 3 |
| Interceptions | 13 | T12 | 8 |
| Sacks | 39 | T18 | T8 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.333 | 6 | 3 |
| TO Differential | +6 | T10 | T5 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Patrick Mahomes | 581 | 392 | 3,928 | 26 | 11 |
| Carson Wentz | 19 | 12 | 118 | 0 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kareem Hunt | 200 | 728 | 3.6 | 7 |
| Isiah Pacheco | 83 | 310 | 3.7 | 1 |
| Patrick Mahomes | 58 | 307 | 5.3 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Travis Kelce | 97 | 823 | 8.5 | 3 |
| Xavier Worthy | 59 | 638 | 10.8 | 6 |
| DeAndre Hopkins | 41 | 437 | 10.7 | 4 |
| Noah Gray | 40 | 437 | 10.9 | 5 |
| Samaje Perine | 28 | 322 | 11.5 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Harrison Butker, 21-25 FGs, 29-31 PATs, 92 points
**TACKLES:** Nick Bolton, 106; Drue Tranquill, 94
**SACKS:** George Karlaftis, 8.0; Tershawn Wharton, 6.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Jaden Hicks, 3; 4 players tied with 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**MOVING ON FROM THE MOHAWK** When Patrick Mahomes took the NFL by storm in 2018, his "mohawk fade" hairstyle also swept its way through Kansas City-area barbershops — but now it's no more. Mahomes' barber said frustration after the Super Bowl LIX loss factored into the three-time champion's decision, but Mahomes said it was more about superstition. He also said he's happier with the new look: "I've looked at some videos from last year, and I can't believe all you guys let me keep that nappy hair for so long," Mahomes joked.

ANGELINA ALCANTAR/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

**GOOD D-LINE 'JUJU'** The Chiefs drafted Tennessee defensive tackle **Omarr Norman-Lott** in the second round (No. 63 overall) — and in doing so, they definitely added some "JuJu." One year after Kansas City signed running back Carson Steele, who made headlines for owning a pet alligator, Norman-Lott revealed after being drafted that he owned a calico ball python named JuJu.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** The deep ball has disappeared from the Chiefs' arsenal since the Tyreek Hill trade, but Hollywood Brown was supposed to help bring it back last season. He signed a one-year deal with Kansas City, only to get hurt on the first snap in the preseason, which limited him to two games before the playoffs. That made his free-agency decision an easy one. "I knew all along I wanted to be back. ... We had some unfinished business," he said.

**BACKUP QB SHUFFLE** For the fourth consecutive season, the Chiefs have a new backup quarterback. Chad Henne "Given Sunday" was Kansas City's No. 2 QB for Mahomes' first five seasons, but his retirement ushered in one-year stints for Blaine Gabbert, Carson Wentz and now Gardner Minshew II, who spent last season with the Las Vegas Raiders. Minshew, who made the Pro Bowl two seasons ago with Indianapolis, started his career with Jacksonville and Philadelphia.

# SCOUTING THE CHIEFS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP KANSAS CITY

"Patrick Mahomes is still the magician, an escape artist who really broke the mold at quarterback. They've got to do a better job of protecting him, though. Between Jaylon Moore and Josh Simmons, someone is going to be the long-term answer at left tackle. ... I don't see a better interior combo in the league than Trey Smith and Creed Humphrey. You can tell that Brett Veach's next big move is going to be a huge deal for Smith. That's money well spent. ... Travis Kelce is near the end of a stellar career, but you can count on him to catch the football and find a seam in the defense still. ... Xavier Worthy creates so much separation, he's almost always open, but his hands and routes can still stand for some improvement. ... Rashee Rice is getting healthy, and he can still make a difference for this offense. ... I think running it back with Hollywood Brown made sense. ... The next big deals on defense are reserved for Trent McDuffie and George Karlaftis after they picked up the fifth-year options. Veach nailed both of those draft picks. ... Starting to see some decline from Chris Jones. Hall of Fame kind of player, but the durability is starting to become an issue. ... Speaking of durability, the Chiefs are crossing their fingers to get a full season out of Charles Omenihu. When he's feeling good, he can flat-out play. ... Nick Bolton is a real thumper. ... Feels like it's time for the Chiefs to find some new blood at corner to go with McDuffie. ... Bryan Cook has a ton of range."

## 2025 CHIEFS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Mahomes, Patrick | QB | 6-2 | 225 | 8 | Texas Tech | D1-17 | D1-KC-17 |
| 17 | Minshew II, Gardner | QB | 6-1 | 225 | 6 | Washington State | FA-LV-25 | D6-Jac-19 |
| 19 | Oladokun, Chris | QB | 6-1 | 213 | 1 | South Dakota St. | FA-22 | FA-Pit-22 |
| 19 | Zappe, Bailey | QB | 6-1 | 215 | 3 | WKU | FA-Cle-25 | D4-NE-22 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 29 | Hunt, Kareem | RB | 5-11 | 216 | 8 | Toledo | FA-24 | D3-KC-17 |
| 38 | Ingram, Keaontay | RB | 6-0 | 220 | 3 | USC | FA-23 | D6-Ari-22 |
| 25 | Mitchell, Elijah | RB | 5-10 | 200 | 4 | Louisiana | FA-SF-25 | D6-SF-21 |
| 10 | Pacheco, Isiah | RB | 5-10 | 216 | 3 | Rutgers | D7b-22 | D7b-KC-22 |
| 42 | Steele, Carson | FB | 6-0 | 228 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Brown, Hollywood | WR | 5-9 | 180 | 6 | Oklahoma | FA-Ari-24 | D1-Bal-19 |
| 89 | Brownlee, Jason | WR | 6-3 | 202 | 2 | Southern Miss | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| 83 | Gray, Noah | TE | 6-3 | 240 | 4 | Duke | D5a-21 | D5a-KC-21 |
| 87 | Kelce, Travis | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 12 | Cincinnati | D3a-13 | D3a-KC-13 |
| 24 | Moore, Skyy | WR | 5-10 | 195 | 3 | Western Michigan | D2a-22 | D2a-KC-22 |
| 81 | Remigio, Nikko | WR | 5-9 | 187 | 1 | Fresno State | FA-23 | FA-KC-23 |
| 4 | Rice, Rashee | WR | 6-1 | 204 | 2 | SMU | D2-23 | D2-KC-23 |
| 82 | Ross, Justyn | WR | 6-4 | 210 | 3 | Clemson | FA-22 | FA-KC-22 |
| 9 | Smith-Schuster, JuJu | WR | 6-1 | 215 | 7 | USC | FA-24 | D2-Pit-17 |
| 19 | Thornton, Tyquan | WR | 6-2 | 185 | 3 | Baylor | FA-24 | D2-NE-22 |
| 12 | Wiley, Jared | TE | 6-6 | 249 | 1 | TCU | D4a-24 | D4a-KC-24 |
| 1 | Worthy, Xavier | WR | 5-11 | 165 | 1 | Texas | D1-24 | D1-KC-24 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66 | Caliendo, Mike | OL | 6-4 | 301 | 2 | Western Michigan | FA-22 | FA-KC-22 |
| 75 | Driskell, Ethan | T | 6-8 | 313 | 1 | Marshall | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 72 | Godrick, Chukwuebuka | T | 6-5 | 293 | 1 | None | FA-23 | FA-KC-23 |
| 61 | Hanson, C.J. | OL | 6-5 | 300 | 1 | Holy Cross | D7-24 | D7-KC-24 |
| 52 | Humphrey, Creed | C | 6-4 | 302 | 4 | Oklahoma | D2b-21 | D2b-KC-21 |
| 70 | Mettauer, McKade | G | 6-3 | 307 | 1 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 77 | Moore, Jaylon | T | 6-4 | 311 | 4 | Western Michigan | FA-SF-25 | D5a-SF-21 |
| 64 | Morris, Wanya | OL | 6-6 | 307 | 2 | Oklahoma | D3-23 | D3-KC-23 |
| 60 | Nourzad, Hunter | OL | 6-3 | 317 | 1 | Penn State | D5-24 | D5-KC-24 |
| 65 | Smith, Trey | G | 6-6 | 321 | 4 | Tennessee | D6-21 | D6-KC-21 |
| 76 | Suamataia, Kingsley | T | 6-4 | 326 | 1 | BYU | D2-24 | D2-KC-24 |
| 74 | Taylor, Jawaan | T | 6-5 | 330 | 6 | Florida | FA-Jac-23 | D2-Jac-19 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 | Anudike-Uzomah, Felix | DE | 6-4 | 255 | 2 | Kansas State | D1-23 | D1-KC-23 |
| 51 | Danna, Mike | DE | 6-2 | 257 | 5 | Michigan | D5-20 | D5-KC-20 |
| 94 | Herring, Malik | DE | 6-3 | 275 | 4 | Georgia | FA-21 | FA-KC-21 |
| 99 | Ika, Siaki | DT | 6-3 | 335 | 1 | Baylor | FA-24 | D3-Cle-23 |
| 95 | Jones, Chris | DT | 6-6 | 310 | 9 | Mississippi State | D2-16 | D2-KC-16 |
| 56 | Karlaftis, George | DE | 6-4 | 263 | 3 | Purdue | D1b-22 | D1b-KC-22 |
| 96 | Lovett, Fabien | DT | 6-3 | 316 | 1 | Florida State | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 90 | Omenihu, Charles | DE | 6-5 | 280 | 6 | Texas | FA-SF-23 | D5-Hou-19 |
| 69 | Pennel, Mike | NT | 6-4 | 330 | 10 | Colorado St.-Pueblo | FA-23 | FA-GB-14 |
| | Tillery, Jerry | DL | 6-6 | 295 | 6 | Notre Dame | FA-Min-25 | D1-LV-19 |
| 92 | Tuipulotu, Marlon | DT | 6-2 | 307 | 3 | USC | FA-24 | D6a-Phi-21 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Bolton, Nick | LB | 5-11 | 237 | 4 | Missouri | D2a-21 | D2a-KC-21 |
| 54 | Chenal, Leo | LB | 6-3 | 250 | 3 | Wisconsin | D3-22 | D3-KC-22 |
| 48 | Christiansen, Cole | LB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | Army | FA-22 | FA-LAC-20 |
| 43 | Cochrane, Jack | LB | 6-3 | 236 | 3 | South Dakota | FA-22 | FA-KC-22 |
| 44 | Jones, Cam | LB | 6-2 | 227 | 2 | Indiana | FA-23 | FA-KC-23 |
| 23 | Tranquill, Drue | LB | 6-2 | 234 | 6 | Notre Dame | FA-LAC-23 | D4-LAC-19 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Bush, Deon | S | 6-0 | 200 | 8 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-Chi-22 | D4b-Chi-16 |
| 27 | Conner, Chamarri | DB | 6-0 | 202 | 2 | Virginia Tech | D4-23 | D4-KC-23 |
| 6 | Cook, Bryan | S | 6-1 | 206 | 3 | Cincinnati | D2b-22 | D2b-KC-22 |
| | Edwards, Mike | S | 5-10 | 205 | 6 | Kentucky | FA-TB-25 | D3-TB-19 |
| 8 | Fulton, Kristian | CB | 5-11 | 197 | 5 | LSU | FA-LAC-25 | D2-Ten-20 |
| 21 | Hicks, Jaden | DB | 6-1 | 215 | 1 | Washington State | D4b-24 | D4b-KC-24 |
| 13 | Johnson, Nazeeh | CB | 5-10 | 199 | 3 | Marshall | D7c-22 | D7c-KC-22 |
| 22 | McDuffie, Trent | CB | 5-11 | 193 | 3 | Washington | D1a-22 | D1a-KC-22 |
| 30 | Roland-Wallace, Chris | CB | 5-11 | 202 | 1 | USC | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 46 | Rush, Darius | CB | 6-2 | 198 | 1 | South Carolina | FA-24 | D5-Ind-23 |
| 29 | Scott, Eric | CB | 6-2 | 202 | 3 | Southern Miss | W-Dal-24 | D6a-Dal-23 |
| 35 | Watson, Jaylen | CB | 6-2 | 197 | 3 | Washington State | D7a-22 | D7a-KC-22 |
| 2 | Williams, Joshua | CB | 6-3 | 193 | 3 | Fayetteville State | D4-22 | D4-KC-22 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Araiza, Matt | P | 6-1 | 200 | 1 | San Diego State | FA-24 | D6-Buf-22 |
| 7 | Butker, Harrison | K | 6-4 | 205 | 8 | Georgia Tech | FA-17 | FA-Car-17 |
| 41 | Winchester, James | LS | 6-3 | 209 | 10 | Oklahoma | FA-15 | FA-Phi-13 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 4 | Rashee Rice | 11 | Jalen Royals (R) |
| WR | 5 | Hollywood Brown | 24 | Skyy Moore |
| WR | 1 | Xavier Worthy | 9 | JuJu Smith-Schuster |
| LT | 77 | Jaylon Moore | 71 | Josh Simmons (R) |
| LG | 76 | Kingsley Suamataia | 66 | Mike Caliendo |
| C | 52 | Creed Humphrey | 60 | Hunter Nourzad |
| RG | 65 | Trey Smith | 61 | C.J. Hanson |
| RT | 74 | Jawaan Taylor | 64 | Wanya Morris |
| TE | 87 | Travis Kelce | 83 | Noah Gray |
| QB | 15 | Patrick Mahomes | | Gardner Minshew II |
| RB | 10 | Isiah Pacheco | 29 | Kareem Hunt |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 56 | George Karlaftis | 90 | Charles Omenihu |
| DT | | Jerry Tillery | 69 | Mike Pennel |
| DT | 95 | Chris Jones | 55 | Omarr Norman-Lott (R) |
| DE | 51 | Mike Danna | 97 | Felix Anudike-Uzomah |
| LB | 23 | Drue Tranquill | 31 | Jeffrey Bassa (R) |
| LB | 32 | Nick Bolton | 54 | Leo Chenal |
| CB | 22 | Trent McDuffie | 13 | Nazeeh Johnson |
| CB | | Kristian Fulton | 2 | Joshua Williams |
| NB | 35 | Jaylen Watson | 20 | Nohl Williams (R) |
| SS | 21 | Jaden Hicks | 27 | Chamarri Conner |
| FS | 6 | Bryan Cook | | Mike Edwards |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | 14 | Matt Araiza | PR | 81 | Nikko Remigio |
| K | 7 | Harrison Butker | KR | 81 | Nikko Remigio |

**6.67, 3:08**

The average Chiefs offensive drive lasted a league-high 6.67 plays and 3:08 of game time.

## CHIEFS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Josh Simmons | OT | 6-5 | 310 | Ohio State |
| 2 | Omarr Norman-Lott | DT | 6-3 | 316 | Tennessee |
| 3 | Ashton Gillotte | DE | 6-3 | 270 | Louisville |
| 3 | Nohl Williams | CB | 6-0 | 199 | Cal |
| 4 | Jalen Royals | WR | 6-0 | 195 | Utah State |
| 5 | Jeffrey Bassa | LB | 6-2 | 235 | Oregon |
| 7 | Brashard Smith | RB | 5-10 | 196 | SMU |

After getting exposed in the trenches during a Super Bowl LIX loss, the Chiefs concentrated their draft capital along the offensive and defensive lines. Josh Simmons could be the long-term answer at left tackle if he fully recovers from a knee injury, while Omarr Norman-Lott and Ashton Gillotte bring some much-needed juice to the pass-rush rotation. Nohl Williams will compete for a starting job immediately and also should factor on special teams, while head coach Andy Reid should have fun finding ways to get the ball in Jalen Royals' hands. Jeffrey Bassa and Brashard Smith bring much-needed speed to their position groups and should quickly find roles, at least on special teams.

# LV RAIDERS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Sept. 15 | L.A. Chargers | 10:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Washington | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Chicago | 4:25 |
| Oct. 5 | at Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | Tennessee | 4:05 |
| Oct. 19 | at Kansas City | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 2 | Jacksonville | 4:05 |
| Nov. 6 | at Denver | 8:15 |
| Nov. 17 | Dallas | 8:15 |
| Nov. 23 | Cleveland | 4:05 |
| Nov. 30 | at L.A. Chargers | 4:25 |
| Dec. 7 | Denver | 4:05 |
| Dec. 14 | at Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | at Houston | 4:25 |
| TBD | N.Y. Giants | |
| TBD | Kansas City | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2021 AFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |
| 2022 | 6 |
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2024 | 4 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Pete Carroll
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** 170-120-1
**Offensive Coordinator:** Chip Kelly
**Defensive Coordinator:** Patrick Graham
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Tom McMahon
**Quarterbacks:** Greg Olson
**Running Backs:** Deland McCullough
**Wide Receivers:** Chris Beatty
**Tight Ends:** Luke Steckel
**Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line:** Brennan Carroll
**Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line:** Rob Leonard
**Linebackers:** John Glenn
**Defensive Backs:** Marcus Robertson
**Pass Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs:** Joe Woods

AFC WEST FORECAST

**4**

Having gone through three different leadership regimes over the past four years, the Las Vegas Raiders are far more accustomed to change than they care to admit. They can only hope that the most recent overhaul reaps long-term benefits by halting the hamster wheel they've been on.

With new head coach Pete Carroll and new general manager John Spytek, they might finally accomplish that objective. Carroll, a renowned program builder, and Spytek, who's been groomed in some of the best organizations in the NFL, displayed competence and prudence across an offseason in which they upgraded at quarterback by trading for veteran Geno Smith, selected the most dynamic weapon in the draft in Boise State running back Ashton Jeanty and added playmakers and depth across the roster.

In a word, the offseason made sense. And that is something that has been in short supply for this organization for years.

Smith, who played under Carroll for four seasons in Seattle (two as the starter), significantly lifts the Raiders' quarterback floor. Jeanty brings explosiveness. Add them to dynamic tight end Brock Bowers and capable wide receiver Jakobi Meyers, and the Raiders offense looks a whole lot different than the one that averaged 18.2 points per game last year.

If stalwarts Maxx Crosby, Christian Wilkins and Malcolm Koonce return healthy and get pressure on the quarterback, the defense has a chance to return to its 2023 level, when it surrendered the ninth-fewest points in the NFL. If so, the Raiders have a chance to double their four-win total from last year and potentially push for a playoff spot.

It might be incremental progress, but it would make a world of difference for a team that has struggled to be competitive over the last two seasons.

## OFFENSE

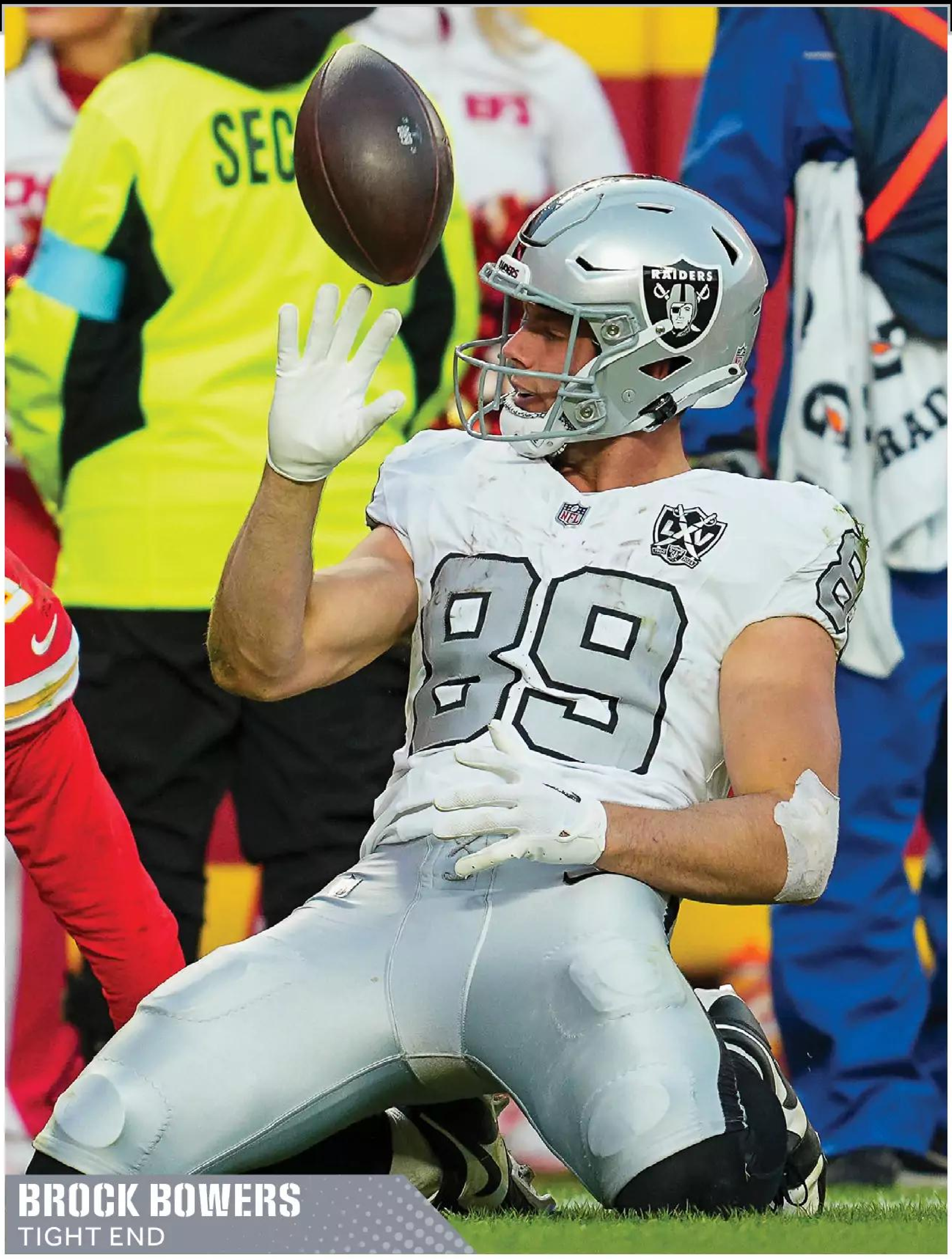
The Raiders took a look at the free-agent and draft quarterback classes and said no thank you. They tried to trade for Los Angeles Rams star Matthew Stafford, then immediately pivoted to Smith when they were unable to convince the Rams to part ways with Stafford.

After acquiring Smith, the Raiders extended his contract by two seasons. He is now under control through the 2027 season, which coincides with Carroll's contract.

Smith led the Seahawks to the sixth-most wins in the NFL since becoming their starter in 2022. He's been among the league's most accurate passers in that time as well. If he can just continue to do what he's done for three straight years, the Raiders finally have a capable quarterback.

He'll be working behind an offensive line that got progressively better last season, primarily due to the return to health of left tackle Kolton Miller and the progress of rookie right tackle DJ Glaze and rookie center Jackson Powers-Johnson. The quarterback and the line should benefit from new offensive coordinator Chip Kelly, and the addition of Jeanty, who ran for 2,601 yards last year at Boise State, pumps immediate life into the worst rushing offense in the NFL last year.

In spite of bad quarterback play and a non-existent run game in '24, Bowers had a record-breaking rookie season, and Meyers exceeded 1,000 yards receiving for the first time in his career. The world for both should expand with Smith, Jeanty, a better line and a better play-caller.



**BROCK BOWERS**
TIGHT END

Rookie wide receiver Jack Bech, a second-round pick from TCU, is expected to be a Day 1 starter and a complementary option alongside Bowers and Meyers.

It does not guarantee the Raiders anything. But it's hard to believe this offense will be as bad as last year's.

## DEFENSE

The Raiders were counting on Crosby, Wilkins and Koonce to be the backbone of their defense last year and to set a tone with their ability to pressure the quarterback, but injuries got in the way.

Koonce went down with a season-ending knee injury just days before the start of the season. A foot injury sidelined Wilkins for the season after five games. Crosby injured his ankle in Week 2 and played hurt the rest of the season. The defense never recovered.

If those three are healthy, everything changes for the better. Not only does it improve the Raiders' ability to get to the quarterback, but it also benefits all other levels of the defense behind them. That is a big deal for a unit that lost starting linebackers Robert Spillane and Devine Deablo, starting cornerback Nate Hobbs and starting safety Tre'von Moehrig in free agency.

The club filled those losses with veteran linebackers Elandon Roberts and Devin White, cornerback Eric Stokes and safety Jeremy Chinn, all of whom came aboard on short-term deals. The belief is that they will adequately replace the high-priced free agents who left, at a fraction of the cost, while preserving flexibility to draft and develop long-range replacement options.

Carroll, one of the great defensive minds in the NFL, gets the benefit of the doubt here. He typically knows how to field capable defenses, and considering how last year's group gave up the seventh-most points in the NFL, it's not like they are rebuilding the Monsters of the Midway.

## SPECIALISTS

The Raiders have one of the best kicker/punter tandems in the league in Daniel Carlson and AJ Cole. They are great luxuries, without question, although the club would love to rely less on them by scoring more touchdowns and extending more drives. Nevertheless, both are proven commodities, with Cole saving the Raiders' bacon on more than a few occasions by flipping the field with booming punts.

Second-year running back Dylan Laube and rookie athlete Tommy Mellott could figure prominently in the return game, and with the new kickoff rules almost guaranteeing more returns, one or the other could help create a field-position advantage this season.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

No one in their right mind is talking about the Raiders and the Super Bowl. At least not in the same sentence. But after being in football purgatory for most of the past 20 years and running through one regime after another over the past decade or so, competence and competitiveness will go a long way.

The combination of Smith and Carroll, to go along with Bowers, Jeanty, Meyers and an improved offensive line, should push the offense forward. If so, the defense will be better too for the mere fact it won't be hung out to dry as often as it was last year.

The in-game decision-making, which was often laughable last year, should also improve. There isn't a situation that Carroll hasn't encountered, and he and Spytek have added some keen minds to their game-day operation, so that's another line of defense against repeating some of the gaffes the Raiders made last year.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-IMAGN IMAGES

## 2024 RESULTS (4-13)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at L.A. Chargers | L | 10-22 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Baltimore | W | 26-23 |
| Sept. | 22 | Carolina | L | 22-36 |
| Sept. | 29 | Cleveland | W | 20-16 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Denver | L | 18-34 |
| Oct. | 13 | Pittsburgh | L | 13-32 |
| Oct. | 20 | at L.A. Rams | L | 15-20 |
| Oct. | 27 | Kansas City | L | 20-27 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Cincinnati | L | 24-41 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Miami | L | 19-34 |
| Nov. | 24 | Denver | L | 19-29 |
| Nov. | 29 | at Kansas City | L | 17-19 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Tampa Bay | L | 13-28 |
| Dec. | 16 | Atlanta | L | 9-15 |
| Dec. | 22 | Jacksonville | W | 19-14 |
| Dec. | 29 | at New Orleans | W | 25-10 |
| Jan. | 5 | L.A. Chargers | L | 20-34 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 303.2 | 27 | 14 |
| Rushing | 79.8 | 32 | 16 |
| Passing | 223.4 | 13 | 4 |
| Scoring | 18.2 | 29 | 14 |
| Third Down % | 34.8 | 30 | 15 |
| Points/Play | 0.290 | 29 | 14 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 333.1 | 15 | 10 |
| Rushing | 116.9 | 13 | 8 |
| Passing | 216.2 | 15 | 8 |
| Scoring | 25.5 | T25 | T12 |
| Interceptions | 10 | T22 | 12 |
| Sacks | 38 | T21 | 10 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.412 | T26 | 14 |
| TO Differential | -16 | T30 | T14 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gardner Minshew II | 306 | 203 | 2,013 | 9 | 10 |
| Aidan O'Connell | 243 | 154 | 1,612 | 8 | 4 |
| Desmond Ridder | 85 | 52 | 458 | 2 | 2 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alexander Mattison | 132 | 420 | 3.2 | 4 |
| Ameer Abdullah | 66 | 311 | 4.7 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brock Bowers | 112 | 1,194 | 10.7 | 5 |
| Jakobi Meyers | 87 | 1,027 | 11.8 | 4 |
| Tre Tucker | 47 | 539 | 11.5 | 3 |
| Ameer Abdullah | 40 | 261 | 6.5 | 3 |
| Alexander Mattison | 36 | 294 | 18.2 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Daniel Carlson, 34-40 FGs, 23-25 PATs, 125 points
**TACKLES:** Robert Spillane, 158; Tre'von Moehrig, 104
**SACKS:** Maxx Crosby, 7.5; Adam Butler, 5.0; K'Lavon Chaisson, 5.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Jack Jones, 3; Tre'von Moehrig, 2; Robert Spillane, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

**HOW GOOD CAN HE BE?** Having played against UNLV on a handful of occasions over the year, running back **Ashton Jeanty** is familiar with the club's home base at Allegiant Stadium. It's an understatement to say that Jeanty tormented the Mountain West Conference — and pretty much every team he played against in an illustrious career that culminated with him finishing as the Heisman Trophy runner-up. There is no guarantee he will be a Pro Bowl running back, but the odds are certainly in favor of a player whom NFL talent evaluators described as one of the cleanest prospects in the draft. That said, he isn't about to make any claims of stepping into the league and picking right up where he left off at Boise State. "Yeah, I mean I wouldn't say I'll get 2,600 yards again right off the rip," Jeanty says, laughing. "But definitely to just be a great asset to this team, a great teammate, and just help bring wins home each and every week."

**COMPETE!** Pete Carroll is a stickler for competition, whether it's creating it on his roster to push players or shooting hoops with his players. Yes, even at 73, the head coach still gets on the basketball court with players who are less than half his age. He and star defensive end Maxx Crosby have already begun a friendly back-and-forth in which they push each other's buttons, trying to motivate each other. "We were shooting hoops yesterday, so he's getting it," Carroll said the day after Crosby signed a new contract extension. "He beat me in PIG, I'll give him that," Crosby responded. "But he's got to see me for the rest of the time." To which Carroll said: "I also told him he's going to have to work his way back up for a rematch." "Yeah, he doesn't want to play HORSE," Crosby said, laughing.

# SCOUTING THE RAIDERS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LAS VEGAS

"Another reboot, restart, relaunch, whatever you want to call it, but Mark Davis and Tom Brady have to hope they finally got it right with an older head coach in Pete Carroll. Pete has great enthusiasm and builds meaningful relationships with his players. They have to give Pete some time to build some stability here. That's a start, but John Spytek has to upgrade a roster that has major flaws. … Geno Smith is good enough to get you to .500, but this isn't a long-term answer at quarterback. … Ashton Jeanty has real star power. This kid reminds me of Barry Sanders. Jeanty can make up for a lot of the other holes on this team. He's simply that good. … Not sure if the Raiders are aiming high enough for their No. 1 receiver with Jakobi Meyers, but he's definitely someone who can put up numbers and is fairly clutch. … No better pass-catching tight end in the NFL than Brock Bowers. He just gets open, and he can run and jump and block pretty well, too. He's the total package. … That contract dispute with Kolton Miller is pretty bad. Wondering if this winds up with him traded if they can't find the right number they can agree on. … Nobody has the combination of pass-rush moves, relentlessness and toughness that Maxx Crosby has. The guy is a true badass. … Thought the Christian Wilkins addition made things tough for offenses last season. … Adam Butler isn't a household name, but he's a problem to block inside. … Devin White is a question mark for attitude and conditioning based on what I saw last season. … Elandon Roberts blows up guards. Everything he sees, he hits. … Not a huge fan of this secondary, especially after losing Nate Hobbs in free agency."

## 2025 RAIDERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 Bradley, Carter | QB | 6-3 | 213 | 1 | South Alabama | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 12 O'Connell, Aidan | QB | 6-3 | 210 | 2 | Purdue | D4b-23 | D4b-LV-23 |
| 7 Smith, Geno | QB | 6-3 | 225 | 12 | West Virginia | T-Sea-25 | D2-NYJ-13 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 Collier, Chris | RB | 5-11 | 210 | 1 | Lock Haven | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 23 Laube, Dylan | RB | 5-10 | 206 | 1 | New Hampshire | D6-24 | D6-LV-24 |
| 28 McCormick, Sincere | RB | 5-9 | 205 | 2 | UTSA | FA-22 | FA-LV-22 |
| 31 Mostert, Raheem | RB | 5-10 | 205 | 10 | Purdue | FA-Mia-25 | FA-Phi-15 |
| 35 Spiller, Isaiah | RB | 6-1 | 215 | 3 | Texas A&M | FA-24 | D4-LAC-22 |
| 3 White, Zamir | RB | 6-0 | 215 | 3 | Georgia | D4a-22 | D4a-LV-22 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81 Bachman, Alex | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | Wake Forest | FA-24 | FA-LAR-19 |
| 89 Bowers, Brock | TE | 6-3 | 243 | 1 | Georgia | D1-24 | D1-LV-24 |
| 80 Foreman, Jeff | WR | 6-0 | 182 | 1 | Arkansas State | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 84 Ismail, Qadir | TE | 6-6 | 232 | 1 | Samford | FA-Bal-25 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 4 Jackson, Shedrick | WR | 6-1 | 200 | 1 | Auburn | FA-24 | FA-Cin-23 |
| 17 Johnson, Collin | WR | 6-6 | 220 | 4 | Texas | FA-Chi-25 | D5-Jac-20 |
| 82 Keyton, Ramel | WR | 6-2 | 191 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 87 Mayer, Michael | TE | 6-4 | 265 | 2 | Notre Dame | D2-23 | D2-LV-23 |
| 16 Meyers, Jakobi | WR | 6-2 | 200 | 6 | NC State | FA-NE-23 | FA-NE-19 |
| 88 Shorter, Justin | TE | 6-5 | 228 | 2 | Florida | FA-24 | D5-Buf-23 |
| 80 Thomas, Ian | TE | 6-4 | 260 | 7 | Indiana | FA-Car-25 | D4a-Car-18 |
| 1 Tucker, Tre | WR | 5-9 | 185 | 2 | Cincinnati | D3b-23 | D3b-LV-23 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72 Ayedze, Gottlieb | T | 6-4 | 309 | 1 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |
| 65 Cappa, Alex | G | 6-6 | 312 | 7 | Humboldt State | FA-Cin-25 | D3-TB-18 |
| 71 Glaze, DJ | T | 6-4 | 315 | 1 | Maryland | D3-24 | D3-LV-24 |
| 63 Johanning, Jake | G | 6-2 | 290 | 1 | Furman | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 61 Meredith, Jordan | G | 6-2 | 300 | 2 | WKU | FA-22 | FA-LAR-21 |
| 74 Miller, Kolton | T | 6-8 | 325 | 7 | UCLA | D1-18 | D1-LV-18 |
| 77 Munford Jr., Thayer | T | 6-6 | 315 | 3 | Ohio State | D7a-22 | D7a-LV-22 |
| 66 Parham, Dylan | G | 6-3 | 285 | 3 | Memphis | D3-22 | D3-LV-22 |
| 58 Powers-Johnson, Ja. | G | 6-3 | 328 | 1 | Oregon | D2-24 | D2-LV-24 |
| 67 Putnam, Will | C | 6-4 | 301 | 1 | Clemson | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 78 Wagner, Dalton | T | 6-8 | 320 | 2 | Arkansas | FA-23 | FA-LV-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69 Butler, Adam | DT | 6-5 | 300 | 7 | Vanderbilt | FA-23 | FA-NE-17 |
| 99 Carter II, Andre | DE | 6-6 | 256 | 2 | Army | FA-24 | FA-Min-23 |
| 93 Carter, Zach | DT | 6-4 | 302 | 3 | Florida | FA-24 | D3-Cin-22 |
| 98 Crosby, Maxx | DE | 6-5 | 255 | 6 | Eastern Michigan | D4a-19 | D4a-LV-19 |
| 95 Fotu, Leki | DL | 6-5 | 335 | 4 | Utah | FA-NYJ-25 | D4a-Ari-20 |
| 60 Fox, Tomari | DT | 6-2 | 288 | 1 | North Carolina | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 51 Koonce, Malcolm | DE | 6-3 | 250 | 4 | Buffalo | D3a-21 | D3a-LV-21 |
| 96 Laulu, Jonah | DT | 6-5 | 292 | 1 | Oklahoma | W-Ind-24 | D7-Ind-24 |
| 92 Manoa, Tyler | DL | 6-5 | 315 | 1 | Arizona | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 90 Oghoufo, Ovie | DE | 6-4 | 250 | 1 | LSU | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 49 Snowden, Charles | DE | 6-7 | 245 | 1 | Virginia | FA-23 | FA-Chi-21 |
| Tasi, Laki | DL | 6-6 | 348 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-LV-25 |
| 94 Wilkins, Christian | DT | 6-4 | 310 | 6 | Clemson | FA-Mia-24 | D1-Mia-19 |
| 9 Wilson, Tyree | DE | 6-6 | 275 | 2 | Texas Tech | D1-23 | D1-LV-23 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 45 Eichenberg, Tommy | LB | 6-2 | 233 | 1 | Ohio State | D5-24 | D5-LV-24 |
| 53 Gainer, Amari | LB | 6-3 | 236 | 1 | North Carolina | FA-24 | FA-LV-24 |
| 43 Mauga, Kana'i | LB | 6-2 | 245 | 2 | USC | FA-22 | FA-Den-22 |
| 52 Roberts, Elandon | LB | 6-1 | 238 | 10 | Houston | FA-Pit-25 | D6b-NE-16 |
| 55 Smith, Jaylon | LB | 6-2 | 240 | 6 | Notre Dame | FA-25 | D2-Dal-16 |
| 40 White, Devin | LB | 6-0 | 237 | 6 | LSU | FA-Hou-25 | D1-TB-19 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Bennett, Jakorian | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 2 | Maryland | D4a-23 | D4a-LV-23 |
| 11 Chinn, Jeremy | S | 6-3 | 220 | 5 | Southern Illinois | FA-Was-25 | D2b-Car-20 |
| 34 Harper, Thomas | S | 5-8 | 195 | 1 | Notre Dame | W-LAC-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 30 Holmes, Darnay | CB | 5-10 | 195 | 5 | UCLA | FA-24 | D4-NYG-20 |
| 32 Johnson Jr., Lonnie | S | 6-2 | 213 | 6 | Kentucky | FA-Car-25 | D2-Hou-19 |
| 36 Kelly, Kyu Blu | CB | 6-1 | 185 | 2 | Stanford | FA-24 | D5-Bal-23 |
| 20 Pola-Mao, Isaiah | S | 6-4 | 205 | 3 | USC | FA-22 | FA-LV-22 |
| 25 Richardson, Dec. | CB | 6-2 | 188 | 1 | Mississippi State | D4-24 | D4-LV-24 |
| 29 Smith II, Chris | S | 5-11 | 195 | 2 | Georgia | D5-23 | D5-LV-23 |
| 22 Stokes, Eric | CB | 6-1 | 194 | 4 | Georgia | FA-GB-25 | D1-GB-21 |
| 40 Sutherland, Jonathan | S | 5-10 | 202 | 2 | Penn State | FA-25 | FA-SEA-23 |
| 37 Taylor, Trey | S | 6-0 | 213 | 1 | Air Force | D7a-24 | D7a-LV-24 |
| 27 Webb, Sam | CB | 6-2 | 195 | 2 | Missouri Western | FA-22 | FA-LV-22 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 Bobenmoyer, Jacob | LS | 6-2 | 235 | 5 | Northern Colorado | FA-Den-23 | FA-Den-20 |
| 8 Carlson, Daniel | K | 6-5 | 215 | 7 | Auburn | FA-18 | D5-Min-18 |
| 6 Cole, AJ | P | 6-4 | 220 | 6 | NC State | FA-19 | FA-LV-19 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 16 | Jakobi Meyers | 19 | Tommy Mellott (R) |
| WR | 1 | Tre Tucker | 10 | Dont'e Thornton Jr. (R) |
| WR | 18 | Jack Bech (R) | 17 | Collin Johnson |
| LT | 74 | Kolton Miller | 60 | Charles Grant (R) |
| LG | 66 | Dylan Parham | 61 | Jordan Meredith |
| C | 58 | Jackson Powers-Johnson | 61 | Jordan Meredith |
| RG | 65 | Alex Cappa | 76 | Caleb Rogers (R) |
| RT | 71 | DJ Glaze | 77 | Thayer Munford Jr. |
| TE | 89 | Brock Bowers | 87 | Michael Mayer |
| QB | 7 | Geno Smith | 12 | Aidan O'Connell |
| RB | 2 | Ashton Jeanty (R) | 31 | Raheem Mostert |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 98 | Maxx Crosby | 49 | Charles Snowden |
| DT | 94 | Christian Wilkins | 69 | Adam Butler |
| DT | 96 | Jonah Laulu | 92 | JJ Pegues (R) |
| DE | 51 | Malcolm Koonce | 9 | Tyree Wilson |
| LB | 40 | Devin White | 55 | Jaylon Smith |
| LB | 52 | Elandon Roberts | 54 | Cody Lindenberg (R) |
| CB | 0 | Jakorian Bennett | 25 | Decamerion Richardson |
| CB | 22 | Eric Stokes | 26 | Darien Porter (R) |
| NB | 30 | Darnay Holmes | 34 | Thomas Harper |
| S | 11 | Jeremy Chinn | 32 | Lonnie Johnson Jr. |
| S | 20 | Isaiah Pola-Mao | 29 | Chris Smith II |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 8 | Daniel Carlson | KR | 23 | Dylan Laube |
| P | 6 | AJ Cole | PR | 19 | Tommy Mellott (R) |

**1,357**

After letting Josh Jacobs walk in free agency, the Raiders rushed for just 1,357 yards as a team, more than 200 yards fewer than the 31st-place Jets.

## RAIDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ashton Jeanty | RB | 5-8 | 211 | Boise State |
| 2 | Jack Bech | WR | 6-1 | 214 | TCU |
| 3 | Darien Porter | CB | 6-2 | 195 | Iowa State |
| 3 | Caleb Rogers | OL | 6-4 | 312 | Texas Tech |
| 3 | Charles Grant | OT | 6-4 | 309 | William & Mary |
| 4 | Dont'e Thornton Jr. | WR | 6-5 | 205 | Tennessee |
| 4 | Tonka Hemingway | DT | 6-2 | 284 | South Carolina |
| 6 | JJ Pegues | DT | 6-2 | 309 | Ole Miss |
| 6 | Tommy Mellott | WR | 5-11 | 200 | Montana State |
| 6 | Cam Miller | QB | 6-1 | 215 | North Dakota St. |
| 7 | Cody Lindenberg | ILB | 6-2 | 236 | Minnesota |

The Raiders drafted two certain starters in Ashton Jeanty, a dynamic running back, and Jack Bech, a big, physical wide receiver. Time will tell how long it takes for others to start making contributions, but the club believes Dont'e Thornton Jr. can provide immediate help as a downfield threat, and that JJ Pegues and Tonka Hemingway can earn rotational roles on the defensive line. Darien Porter will get every chance to see the field as early as possible. The good news for all the draft picks is that head coach Pete Carroll is not averse to playing young players right out of the gate.

# LA CHARGERS

AFC WEST FORECAST

3

Led by their resolute head coach, Jim Harbaugh, the Los Angeles Chargers carried discipline, belief and a bold new vision into the 2024 season. Pegged as a sleeper in the AFC, with pundits split between skepticism and full-on belief, the Chargers delivered a dramatic turnaround, winning 11 games and clinching a playoff berth. It was a remarkable feat, especially after finishing 5-12 the season before, and it marked the team's best season in years.

As with previous stops, Harbaugh reignited a stagnant franchise, transforming a below-average program into an immediate winner. Partnering with general manager Joe Hortiz, he built a playoff team not through flashy moves, but with homegrown talent, under-the-radar signings and low-profile trades.

But that success raises tougher questions: Is last season's turnaround sustainable? Are they truly ready to contend? For all the progress, the reality hasn't changed — the Chargers haven't won a playoff game since the 2018 season.

## OFFENSE

Quarterback Justin Herbert's resilience in battling injury last season highlighted how often he was hit behind a subpar interior line, a situation addressed in free agency. His knack for creating plays under duress underscored how the offense's limitations, from injuries to a thin receiving corps, forced him to carry an even heavier burden. The team's next step depends on improving his supporting cast.

Reliable pass-catchers remain the team's biggest question mark. Despite being linked to several high-profile names through free agency and trade, the team whiffed on every opportunity.

Bright spots do exist, though. Ladd McConkey was the standout, the lone 1,000-yard receiver and a dynamic slot threat. But behind him, the talent gap was — and still is — glaring. Quentin Johnston improved in Year 2, but he's still nowhere near the player the team envisioned he would be as the 21st overall pick in 2023. Mike Williams returns on a one-year deal after bouncing between the New York Jets and Pittsburgh Steelers last year at 30; he gives Herbert a large catch radius, end zone threat and familiarity.

The team spent a second-round pick on Ole Miss standout Tre Harris, who led the FBS with 128.8 receiving yards per game. Like Williams, Harris' size gives Herbert the big outside target he's lacked. Newly added veteran tight end Tyler Conklin, who started 15 games for the Jets in 2024, should jockey for targets with Will Dissly.

Staying true to the Harbaugh-Greg Roman blueprint, the Chargers went all-in at running back this offseason. After a serviceable season from former Baltimore Ravens J.K. Dobbins and Gus Edwards, they let the two walk. Enter fifth-year veteran Najee Harris and first-round pick Omarion Hampton — two backs who bring exactly what the Chargers need: youth and durability. Both are tailor-made for the kind of smash-mouth, run-heavy offense Harbaugh and Roman implemented last season. Harbaugh sees them as co-starters, expecting to use them equally in the ground game.

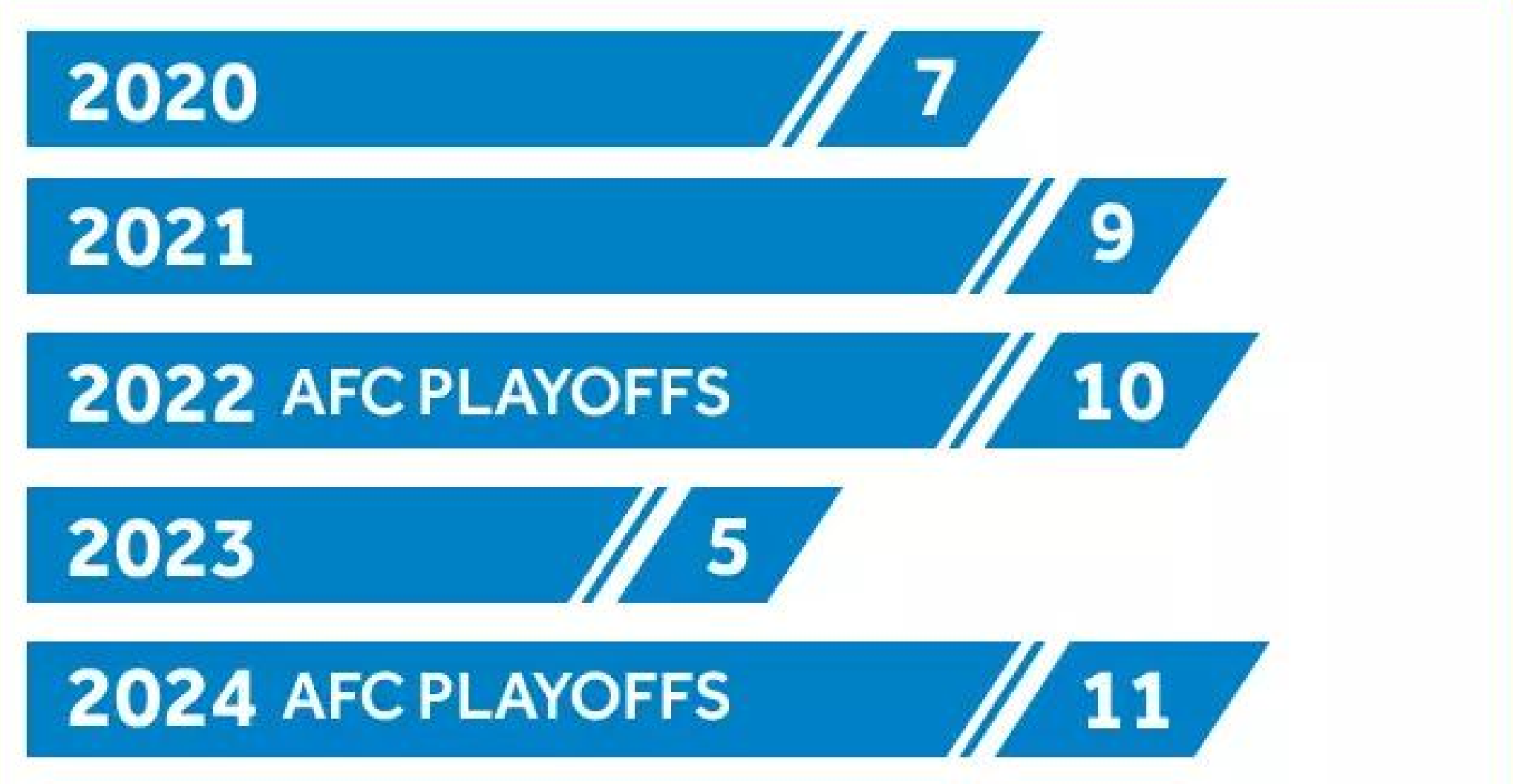
After last season's struggles, particularly along the interior, the Chargers' two-running back investment will operate behind what they hope is a legitimately improved offensive line — emphasis on hope. The tackle spots are the sure thing: Joe Alt, a first-team All-Rookie selection, locks down the right side, while Pro Bowler Rashawn Slater — currently in contract talks — returns to anchor the left.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept 5 | Kansas City (São Paulo) | 8:00 |
| Sept. 15 | at Las Vegas | 10:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Denver | 4:05 |
| Sept. 28 | at N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | Washington | 4:25 |
| Oct. 12 | at Miami | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Indianapolis | 4:05 |
| Oct. 23 | Minnesota | 8:15 |
| Nov. 2 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | Pittsburgh | 8:20 |
| Nov. 16 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | BYE | |
| Nov. 30 | Las Vegas | 4:25 |
| Dec. 8 | Philadelphia | 8:15 |
| Dec. 14 | at Kansas City | 1:00 |
| Dec 21 | at Dallas | 1:00 |
| TBD | Houston | |
| TBD | at Denver | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Jim Harbaugh
**Record With Team:** 11-6
**Career Record:** 55-25-1
**Offensive Coordinator:** Greg Roman
**Defensive Coordinator:** Jesse Minter
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Ryan Ficken
**Passing Game Coord.:** Marcus Brady
**Quarterbacks:** Shane Day
**Running Backs:** Kiel McDonald
**Offensive Quality Control/Wide Receivers:** Jeff Carpenter
**Wide Receivers:** Sanjay Lal
**Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends:** Andy Bischoff
**Offensive Line:** Mike Devlin
**Defensive Line:** Mike Elston
**Linebackers:** NaVorro Bowman
**Defensive Backs:** Steve Clinkscale
**Safeties:** Adam Fuller

DERWIN JAMES JR.
SAFETY

GARY A. VASQUEZ-IMAGN IMAGES

Run-blocking was a major liability last season, and while the team took a swing by signing Super Bowl-winning guard Mekhi Becton to shore up the right side, the interior still feels like a patchwork experiment. The Chargers haven't ruled out moving Zion Johnson to center — a sign they're still searching for answers — while free-agent acquisition Andre James, re-signed Bradley Bozeman and last year's starting right guard Trey Pipkins III are all in the mix.

## DEFENSE

With the departure of Joey Bosa after nine seasons, the team has cut ties with one of the last remnants of the Chargers' San Diego days. Several familiar faces remain, though. Khalil Mack and Denzel Perryman return on team-friendly one-year deals, but a new wave of leadership is rising. Linebacker Daiyan Henley and edge rusher Tuli Tuipulotu emerged as key contributors in Year 2. Henley, who ranked in the top 10 in the NFL in tackles (147), and Tuipulotu, who led the team in sacks (8.5), could both be All-Pro candidates by season's end.

Linebacker Troy Dye — who worked his way up from special teamer to key contributor through a wave of injuries — re-signed this offseason. Junior Colson, whose rookie season was marred by injuries, had already been factored into the defensive plans before going down and could carve out a similar role if healthy.

Derwin James Jr. continues to improve with age, playing at an All-Pro level. He thrives in coordinator Jesse Minter's fast-paced system, making an impact in coverage, run defense and as a blitzer. Alongside him, Alohi Gilman quietly took a step forward last season, improving under the new regime before a late-season hamstring injury. When he returned before the playoffs, so did his reliability.

Thin up front after losing starters Poona Ford and Morgan Fox, the Chargers return only one proven line contributor in Teair Tart. The team turned to free agency and the draft, headlined by the addition of Jamaree Caldwell. The 340-pound rookie has the size and strength to anchor the interior. Veterans Da'Shawn Hand and Naquan Jones have a chance to carve out a spot in the rotation.

Cornerback remains a concern. Both Asante Samuel Jr. and Kristian Fulton departed in free agency. The team signed veterans Donte Jackson and Benjamin St-Juste, both of whom started last season for the Steelers and Commanders, respectively. Jackson brings a blend of speed and agility that should help in man coverage, while the 6-foot-3, 200-pound St-Juste adds length, quick feet and the ability to contribute against the run, particularly from the slot.

Beyond those two, it was a revolving door at cornerback last year, with Cam Hart, Ja'Sir Taylor and Tarheeb Still all seeing snaps but also battling injuries that kept them off the field. Expect them to be in the mix again this season for the bulk of snaps, assuming they can stay healthy.

## SPECIALISTS

Special teams remain one of the most stable units, with placekicker Cameron Dicker and punter JK Scott returning together under coordinator Ryan Ficken for the fourth consecutive season. Dicker became one of the NFL's most reliable kickers, converting 39-of-42 field-goal attempts last year, third-best in the league, while thriving under the new kickoff rules thanks to his unique style. Scott re-signed for two years, providing stability at punter. Derius Davis, who handled both kickoff and punt returns last season, didn't score a touchdown but consistently flipped field position with his quickness and cutting ability.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Last season, the Chargers won every game they should have and stayed competitive in matchups where they were underdogs. The same is expected this season. The next logical step is competing for the AFC West title. The Kansas City Chiefs still reign supreme in the division, though with a slightly weaker grip. The Denver Broncos, just one game behind the Chargers last season, added key pieces to an inconsistent but promising team. In reality, the Chargers could move down the division ladder but will remain competitive nonetheless.

## 2024 RESULTS (11-6)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Las Vegas | W | 22-10 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Carolina | W | 26-3 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Pittsburgh | L | 10-20 |
| Sept. | 29 | Kansas City | L | 10-17 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Denver | W | 23-16 |
| Oct. | 21 | at Arizona | L | 15-17 |
| Oct. | 27 | New Orleans | W | 26-8 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Cleveland | W | 27-10 |
| Nov. | 10 | Tennessee | W | 27-17 |
| Nov. | 17 | Cincinnati | W | 34-27 |
| Nov. | 25 | Baltimore | L | 23-30 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Atlanta | W | 17-13 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Kansas City | L | 17-19 |
| Dec. | 15 | Tampa Bay | L | 17-40 |
| Dec. | 19 | Denver | W | 34-27 |
| Dec. | 28 | at New England | W | 40-7 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Las Vegas | W | 34-20 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 11 | at Houston | L | 12-32 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 324.2 | 20 | 8 |
| Rushing | 110.7 | 17 | 8 |
| Passing | 213.5 | 19 | 8 |
| Scoring | 23.6 | 11 | 5 |
| Third Down % | 40.3 | 11 | 5 |
| Points/Play | 0.387 | 11 | 5 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | AFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 324.4 | 11 | 8 |
| Rushing | 117.5 | 14 | 9 |
| Passing | 206.9 | 7 | 4 |
| Scoring | 17.7 | 1 | 1 |
| Interceptions | 15 | T8 | T5 |
| Sacks | 46 | T6 | 4 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.301 | 2 | 2 |
| TO Differential | +12 | T3 | 3 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Justin Herbert | 504 | 332 | 3,870 | 23 | 3 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| J.K. Dobbins | 195 | 905 | 4.6 | 9 |
| Gus Edwards | 101 | 365 | 3.6 | 4 |
| Justin Herbert | 69 | 306 | 4.4 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ladd McConkey | 82 | 1,149 | 14.0 | 7 |
| Quentin Johnston | 55 | 711 | 12.9 | 8 |
| Will Dissly | 50 | 481 | 9.6 | 2 |
| Joshua Palmer | 39 | 584 | 15.0 | 1 |
| J.K. Dobbins | 32 | 153 | 4.8 | 0 |

**KICKING:** Cameron Dicker, 39-42 FGs, 33-36 PATs, 150 points
**TACKLES:** Daiyan Henley, 147; Derwin James Jr., 93
**SACKS:** Tuli Tuipulotu, 8.5; Bud Dupree, 6.0; Khalil Mack, 6.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Tarheeb Still, 4; Elijah Molden, 3

## OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**LAST MAN STANDING** **Denzel Perryman** is the last player on the Los Angeles Chargers roster to have donned a San Diego Chargers uniform in Qualcomm Stadium. He and Joey Bosa were the final holdouts, but Bosa moved on in the offseason. At 32, Perryman may have a few seasons left, but his future with the Chargers — the team that drafted him in the second round in 2015 — isn't guaranteed past this season. He is one of just four active players in the NFL heading into this season who played for the San Diego Chargers, joining Bosa, Hunter Henry and Keenan Allen.

**A MAN OF GOOD TASTE** Who among us hasn't doom scrolled through DoorDash late at night? Rookie Jamaree Caldwell, whose mother owns a catering business, is a true food connoisseur. So much so that coaches would check his DoorDash app for late-night drop-offs, as noted by NFL Network analyst Daniel Jeremiah during the draft. Once tipping the scales at 430 pounds during the pandemic, Caldwell worked hard to slim down to 340, shedding weight while maintaining surprising speed for a man of his size.

**FOOTBALL ABROAD BEM-VINDO AO BRASIL!** The Chargers are set to kick off the 2025 season in São Paulo as part of the NFL International Games, becoming the first NFL team to play on five continents (including preseason games in Tokyo, Berlin and Sydney). This marks their return to international play after a six-year hiatus, following their last international game in 2019 in Mexico City. The Chargers previously played in London in 2008 and 2018. Their international regular-season record stands at 1-2. In 1976, the team played in the first-ever NFL game outside North America, a preseason game with the St. Louis Cardinals in Tokyo at the Mainichi Star Bowl, where they lost 20-10.

## SCOUTING THE CHARGERS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES

"Jim Harbaugh has his quirks, sure, but he's a great football coach and leader. The buy-in factor is so high with this squad. … Was kinda shocked to see Justin Herbert melt down in the playoffs. I know the Texans have a great defense, but this was concerning, honestly. He's a much better quarterback than what he showed that day, but it's become a thing with him in the playoffs. He has to push through that barrier because it's holding him and the entire franchise back. … It will help Herbert out having a stud rookie running back with Omarion Hampton. Graded him just as high as Ashton Jeanty on our board. … Thought they nailed the Joe Alt pick last year when they drafted him. I still feel the same way. … Having Mike Williams back is a plus. He's still got the size and some ability to get deep. On jump balls, few are better than him. … Rashawn Slater pitches a lot of shutouts at left tackle. … I can see why they didn't pick up the fifth-year option for Zion Johnson. It's a mixed bag from him so far. … Ladd McConkey doesn't get the credit he deserves. He's outstanding. … They couldn't lose both Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack. That's why they had to keep at least one of them. Bosa was wearing down in terms of his health. Mack has staying power. … Tuli Tuipulotu has every tool it takes to be a really good pass-rusher. … In terms of tackling, speed, finding the football fast, Daiyan Henley is as good as it gets. A poor man's Fred Warner. … Derwin James Jr. is as elite as it gets at safety. Wouldn't trade him for any strong safety."

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

## 2025 CHARGERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Heinicke, Taylor | QB | 6-1 | 210 | 7 | Old Dominion | T-Atl-24 | FA-Min-15 |
| 10 Herbert, Justin | QB | 6-6 | 236 | 5 | Oregon | D1a-20 | D1a-LAC-20 |
| 5 Lance, Trey | QB | 6-4 | 226 | 4 | North Dakota St. | FA-Dal-25 | D1-SF-21 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 Harris, Najee | RB | 6-1 | 242 | 4 | Alabama | FA-Pit-25 | D1-Pit-21 |
| 28 Haskins, Hassan | RB | 6-2 | 228 | 3 | Michigan | W-Ten-24 | D4a-Ten-22 |
| 34 Patterson, Jaret | RB | 5-8 | 195 | 2 | Buffalo | FA-23 | FA-Was-21 |
| 30 Vidal, Kimani | RB | 5-8 | 215 | 1 | Troy | D6-24 | D6-LAC-24 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 Castles, McCallan | TE | 6-5 | 252 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |
| 83 Conklin, Tyler | TE | 6-3 | 248 | 7 | Central Michigan | FA-NYJ-25 | D5a-Min-18 |
| 12 Davis, Derius | WR | 5-8 | 165 | 2 | TCU | D4-23 | D4-LAC-23 |
| 89 Dissly, Will | TE | 6-4 | 265 | 7 | Washington | FA-Sea-24 | D4-Sea-18 |
| 42 Fisk, Tucker | TE | 6-4 | 285 | 2 | Stanford | FA-24 | FA-Atl-22 |
| 41 Fitzpatrick, Dez | WR | 6-2 | 208 | 2 | Louisville | FA-24 | D4-Ten-21 |
| 39 Johnson, Jaylen | WR | 6-2 | 194 | 1 | East Carolina | FA-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 1 Johnston, Quentin | WR | 6-2 | 208 | 2 | TCU | D1-23 | D1-LAC-23 |
| 15 McConkey, Ladd | WR | 6-0 | 185 | 1 | Georgia | D2-24 | D2-LAC-24 |
| 49 Petaia, Jordan | TE | 6-3 | 225 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-LAC-25 |
| 88 Reagor, Jalen | WR | 5-11 | 197 | 4 | TCU | FA-24 | D1-Phi-20 |
| 82 Rice, Brenden | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 1 | USC | D7a-24 | D7a-LAC-24 |
| 86 Shenault, Laviska | WR | 6-1 | 224 | 5 | Colorado | FA-24 | D2-Jac-20 |
| 83 Tomlinson, Eric | TE | 6-6 | 265 | 8 | UTEP | FA-24 | FA-Phi-15 |
| 81 Williams, Mike | WR | 6-3 | 218 | 8 | Clemson | FA-Pit-25 | D1-LAC-17 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 76 Alt, Joe | T | 6-8 | 322 | 1 | Notre Dame | D1-24 | D1-LAC-24 |
| 61 Barnhart, Karsen | G | 6-5 | 316 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 73 Becton, Mekhi | G/T | 6-7 | 363 | 5 | Louisville | FA-Phi-25 | D1-NYJ-20 |
| 75 Bozeman, Bradley | C | 6-5 | 325 | 7 | Alabama | FA-Car-24 | D6c-Bal-18 |
| 78 James, Andre | C | 6-4 | 300 | 6 | UCLA | FA-LV-25 | FA-LV-19 |
| 77 Johnson, Zion | G | 6-3 | 316 | 3 | Boston College | D1-22 | D1-LAC-22 |
| 74 McLellan, Tyler | T | 6-8 | 355 | 1 | Campbell | FA-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 79 Pipkins III, Trey | G/T | 6-6 | 307 | 6 | Sioux Falls | D3-19 | D3-LAC-19 |
| 68 Salyer, Jamaree | OL | 6-4 | 325 | 3 | Georgia | D6a-22 | D6a-LAC-22 |
| 70 Slater, Rashawn | T | 6-4 | 315 | 4 | Northwestern | D1-21 | D1-LAC-21 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 92 Eboigbe, Justin | DL | 6-5 | 292 | 1 | Michigan | D4-24 | D4-LAC-24 |
| 91 Hand, Da'Shawn | DL | 6-3 | 302 | 7 | Alabama | FA-Mia-25 | D4-Det-18 |
| 98 Hinton, Christopher | DL | 6-4 | 310 | 2 | Michigan | FA-22 | FA-NYG-22 |
| 96 Jones, Naquan | DL | 6-3 | 313 | 4 | Michigan State | FA-Ari-25 | FA-Ten-21 |
| 44 Matlock, Scott | DL | 6-4 | 296 | 2 | Boise State | D6-23 | D6-LAC-23 |
| 93 Ogbonnia, Otito | DL | 6-4 | 320 | 3 | UCLA | D5-22 | D5-LAC-22 |
| 90 Tart, Teair | DL | 6-2 | 315 | 5 | FIU | FA-24 | FA-Ten-20 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 Colson, Junior | LB | 6-3 | 247 | 1 | Michigan | D3-24 | D3-LAC-24 |
| 48 Dupree, Bud | OLB | 6-4 | 269 | 10 | Kentucky | FA-24 | D1-Pit-15 |
| 43 Dye, Troy | LB | 6-3 | 225 | 5 | Oregon | FA-Min-24 | D4c-Min-20 |
| 0 Henley, Daiyan | LB | 6-0 | 225 | 2 | Washington State | D3-23 | D3-LAC-23 |
| 51 Jean-Baptiste, Jer. | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 1 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 52 Mack, Khalil | OLB | 6-3 | 269 | 11 | Buffalo | T-Chi-22 | D1-LV-14 |
| 57 Morris-Brash, Tre'Mon | OLB | 6-2 | 245 | 1 | UCF | FA-24 | FA-LAC-24 |
| 50 Murphy, Caleb | LB | 6-3 | 254 | 1 | Ferris State | FA-24 | FA-Ten-23 |
| 6 Perryman, Denzel | LB | 5-11 | 240 | 10 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-Hou-24 | D2-LAC-15 |
| 53 Phillips, Del'Shawn | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 4 | Illinois | FA-Hou-25 | FA-Atl-19 |
| 45 Tuipulotu, Tuli | OLB | 6-3 | 266 | 2 | USC | D2-23 | D2-LAC-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 Bootle, Dicaprio | CB | 5-10 | 180 | 2 | Nebraska | FA-24 | FA-KC-21 |
| 32 Gilman, Alohi | S | 5-10 | 201 | 5 | Notre Dame | D6-20 | D6-LAC-20 |
| 20 Hart, Cam | CB | 6-2 | 207 | 1 | Notre Dame | D5b-24 | D5b-LAC-24 |
| 26 Jackson, Donte | CB | 5-10 | 180 | 7 | LSU | FA-Pit-25 | D2-Car-18 |
| 3 James Jr., Derwin | S | 6-2 | 215 | 7 | Florida State | D1-18 | D1-LAC-18 |
| 23 Jefferson, Tony | S | 5-11 | 212 | 10 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-Ari-13 |
| 38 Johnson, Emany | S | 6-2 | 218 | 1 | Nevada | FA-24 | FA-Dal-24 |
| 33 Leonard, Deane | DB | 6-0 | 195 | 3 | Ole Miss | D7a-22 | D7a-LAC-22 |
| 2 Molden, Elijah | DB | 5-10 | 192 | 4 | Washington | T-Ten-24 | D3b-Ten-21 |
| 29 Still, Tarheeb | CB | 6-1 | 196 | 1 | Maryland | D5a-24 | D5a-LAC-24 |
| 24 St-Juste, Benjamin | CB | 6-3 | 200 | 4 | Minnesota | FA-Was-25 | D3a-Was-21 |
| 36 Taylor, Ja'Sir | DB | 5-10 | 185 | 3 | Wake Forest | D6b-22 | D6b-LAC-22 |
| 40 Williamson, Kendall | S | 6-0 | 203 | 1 | Stanford | FA-24 | D7-Chi-23 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Dicker, Cameron | K | 6-1 | 216 | 3 | Texas | FA-22 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 47 Harris, Josh | LS | 6-1 | 224 | 13 | Auburn | FA-Atl-22 | FA-Atl-12 |
| 16 Scott, JK | P | 6-5 | 208 | 6 | Alabama | FA-22 | D5b-GB-18 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 15 | Ladd McConkey | 88 | Jalen Reagor |
| WR | 9 | Tre Harris (R) | 81 | Mike Williams |
| WR | 1 | Quentin Johnson | 84 | KeAndre Lambert-Smith (R) |
| LT | 70 | Rashawn Slater | 74 | Tyler McLellan |
| LG | 77 | Zion Johnson | 61 | Karsen Barnhart |
| C | 75 | Bradley Bozeman | 78 | Andre James |
| RG | 73 | Mekhi Becton | 79 | Trey Pipkins III |
| RT | 76 | Joe Alt | 74 | Tyler McLellan |
| TE | 83 | Tyler Conklin | 89 | Will Dissly |
| QB | 10 | Justin Herbert | 4 | Taylor Heinicke |
| RB | 22 | Najee Harris | 8 | Omarion Hampton (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 91 | Da'Shawn Hand | 92 | Justin Eboigbe |
| NT | 90 | Teair Tart | 99 | Jamaree Caldwell (R) |
| DT | 44 | Scott Matlock | 96 | Naquan Jones |
| EDGE | 45 | Tuli Tuipulotu | 54 | Kyle Kennard (R) |
| ILB | 0 | Daiyan Henley | 25 | Junior Colson |
| ILB | 6 | Denzel Perryman | 43 | Troy Dye |
| EDGE | 52 | Khalil Mack | 48 | Bud Dupree |
| CB | 26 | Donte Jackson | 33 | Deane Leonard |
| CB | 20 | Cam Hart | 24 | Benjamin St-Juste |
| SS | 3 | Derwin James Jr. | 23 | Tony Jefferson |
| FS | 32 | Alohi Gilman | 2 | Elijah Molden |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 11 | Cameron Dicker | KR | 12 | Derius Davis |
| P | 16 | JK Scott | PR | 12 | Derius Davis |

**4.4%**

Only 4.4% of Chargers drives ended with an offensive turnover, the lowest rate in the NFL.

## CHARGERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Omarion Hampton | RB | 6-0 | 220 | North Carolina |
| 2 | Tre Harris | WR | 6-2 | 205 | Ole Miss |
| 3 | Jamaree Caldwell | DT | 6-1 | 340 | Oregon |
| 4 | Kyle Kennard | Edge | 6-4 | 254 | South Carolina |
| 5 | KeAndre Lambert-Smith | WR | 6-1 | 188 | Auburn |
| 5 | Oronde Gadsden II | TE | 6-5 | 236 | Syracuse |
| 6 | Branson Taylor | OT | 6-6 | 330 | Pitt |
| 6 | RJ Mickens | S | 6-0 | 210 | Clemson |
| 7 | Trikweze Bridges | S | 6-2 | 200 | Florida |

Despite having Najee Harris on the roster in the short term, the Chargers grabbed their lead back of the future in Omarion Hampton — a powerful, physical runner who can grind down defenses or break off home-run plays. Additionally, second-round pick Tre Harris, a big-bodied outside receiver, should challenge for snaps right away. They doubled down on pass-catchers later, grabbing wideout KeAndre Lambert-Smith and tight end Oronde Gadsden II to round out the group. With glaring holes up front on defense, the Chargers grabbed 340-pound run-stuffer Jamaree Caldwell, who could push for a key role alongside Teair Tart and Naquan Jones. Kyle Kennard also adds needed pass-rushing depth off the edge.

# NFC PREDICTIONS

## NFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
2. DETROIT LIONS
3. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
4. LOS ANGELES RAMS
5. WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
6. GREEN BAY PACKERS
7. ATLANTA FALCONS

## WILD CARD WEEKEND

LIONS OVER FALCONS
BUCS OVER PACKERS
COMMANDERS OVER RAMS

## DIVISIONAL ROUND

EAGLES OVER COMMANDERS
LIONS OVER BUCS

## CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

EAGLES OVER LIONS

## SUPER BOWL LX

BILLS OVER EAGLES

## NFC EAST

1. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
2. WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
3. DALLAS COWBOYS
4. NEW YORK GIANTS

## NFC NORTH

1. DETROIT LIONS
2. GREEN BAY PACKERS
3. MINNESOTA VIKINGS
4. CHICAGO BEARS

## NFC SOUTH

1. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
2. ATLANTA FALCONS
3. CAROLINA PANTHERS
4. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

## NFC WEST

1. LOS ANGELES RAMS
2. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
3. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
4. ARIZONA CARDINALS

## NFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Philadelphia Eagles
2. Detroit Lions
3. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
4. Washington Commanders
5. Los Angeles Rams
6. Green Bay Packers
7. Atlanta Falcons
8. Minnesota Vikings
9. Seattle Seahawks
10. San Francisco 49ers
11. Dallas Cowboys
12. Chicago Bears
13. Arizona Cardinals
14. Carolina Panthers
15. New Orleans Saints
16. New York Giants

## SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year
**SAQUON BARKLEY,** RB, EAGLES

Defensive Player of the Year
**MICAH PARSONS,** DE, COWBOYS

Comeback Player of the Year
**CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY,** RB, 49ERS

Offensive Rookie of the Year
**TETAIROA McMILLAN,** WR, PANTHERS

Defensive Rookie of the Year
**ABDUL CARTER,** EDGE, GIANTS

Coach of the Year
**DAN CAMPBELL,** LIONS

# NFC COACHING CAROUSEL

## HEAD COACHES

### CHICAGO BEARS

**New: Ben Johnson**
**Old: Matt Eberflus/ Thomas Brown**

Johnson was among the most coveted coaches on the market after directing the explosive Detroit Lions offense the past three seasons. He has the task of molding Caleb Williams into the franchise quarterback that he showed flashes of being last season. Offseason additions to the O-line and skill positions should give Johnson and Williams a solid foundation to build upon.

### DALLAS COWBOYS

**New: Brian Schottenheimer**
**Old: Mike McCarthy**

In one of the more head-scratching moves of the offseason, Cowboys owner Jerry Jones decided to promote from within following the disappointing Mike McCarthy era. Schottenheimer, the offensive coordinator last season, did his best to make chicken salad out of an injury-ravaged Dallas offense in 2024. He likely faces the most pressure to produce immediate results of any new hire.

### NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

**New: Kellen Moore**
**Old: Dennis Allen/ Darren Rizzi**

Moore has a solid track record as an offensive coordinator, but he'll have to dig deep into his bag of tricks to produce any offensive magic with the chaotic quarterback situation he inherits following Derek Carr's offseason retirement. We may see the rare rookie head coach/rookie QB combo if Tyler Shough wins the job this summer.

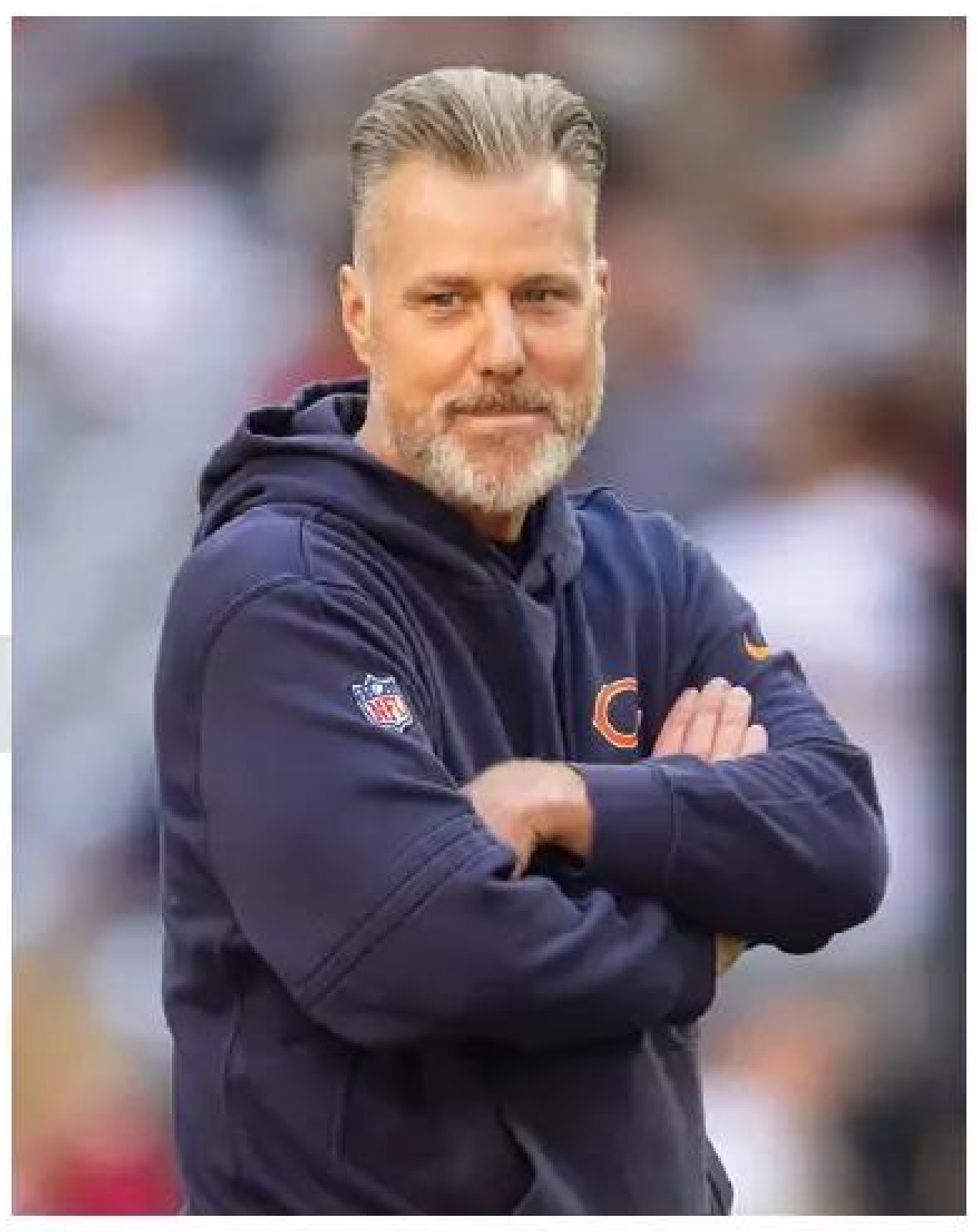
## COORDINATORS

### ATLANTA FALCONS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Jeff Ulbrich**
**Old: Jimmy Lake**

### CHICAGO BEARS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Declan Doyle**
**Old: Shane Waldron**
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Dennis Allen**
**Old: Eric Washington**



### DALLAS COWBOYS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Klayton Adams**
**Old: Brian Schottenheimer**
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Matt Eberflus**
**Old: Mike Zimmer**

### DETROIT LIONS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: John Morton**
**Old: Ben Johnson**
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Kelvin Sheppard**
**Old: Aaron Glenn**

### NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Doug Nussmeier**
**Old: Klint Kubiak**
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Brandon Staley**
**Old: Joe Woods**

### PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Kevin Patullo**
**Old: Kellen Moore**

### SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Klay Kubiak**
**Old: Kyle Shanahan**
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Robert Saleh**
**Old: Nick Sorensen**

### SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Klint Kubiak**
**Old: Ryan Grubb**

### TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR
**New: Josh Grizzard**
**Old: Liam Coen**

LEFT COLUMN, FROM TOP: DAVID BANKS-IMAGN IMAGES; TIM HEITMAN-USA TODAY SPORTS; STEPHEN LEW-IMAGN IMAGES
RIGHT COLUMN, FROM TOP: ED MULHOLLAND-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; STEPHEN LEW-IMAGN IMAGES; MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES; STEPHEN LEW-USA TODAY SPORTS

# DAL COWBOYS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 4 | at Philadelphia | 8:20 |
| Sept. 14 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Chicago | 4:25 |
| Sept. 28 | Green Bay | 8:20 |
| Oct. 5 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Washington | 4:25 |
| Oct. 26 | at Denver | 4:25 |
| Nov. 3 | Arizona | 8:15 |
| Nov. 10 | BYE | |
| Nov. 17 | at Las Vegas | 8:15 |
| Nov. 23 | Philadelphia | 4:25 |
| Nov. 27 | Kansas City | 4:30 |
| Dec. 4 | at Detroit | 8:15 |
| Dec. 14 | Minnesota | 8:20 |
| Dec. 21 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Dec. 25 | at Washington | 1:00 |
| TBD | at N.Y. Giants | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 6 |
| 2021 NFC PLAYOFFS | 12 |
| 2022 NFC PLAYOFFS | 12 |
| 2023 NFC PLAYOFFS | 12 |
| 2024 | 7 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Brian Schottenheimer
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** First season
**Offensive Coordinator:** Klayton Adams
**Defensive Coordinator:** Matt Eberflus
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Nick Sorensen
**Quarterbacks:** Steve Shimko
**Pass Game Coordinator:** Ken Dorsey
**Running Backs:** Derrick Foster
**Wide Receivers:** Junior Adams
**Tight Ends:** Lunda Wells
**Offensive Line:** Conor Riley
**Defensive Line:** Aaron Whitecotton
**Linebackers:** Dave Borgonzi
**Secondary/Cornerbacks:** David Overstreet II
**Secondary/Nickels:** Darian Thompson
**Defensive Passing Game Coordinator:** Andre Curtis

NFC EAST FORECAST
3

The Cowboys go into 2025 the same way they have gone into every season — with Super Bowl aspirations. Can this season possibly turn out differently than the past 29?

The Cowboys are 251-217 with 13 playoff appearances and a 5-13 playoff record since they last won the Super Bowl in 1995. That's also the last time they reached the NFC Championship Game, which is the longest drought in the conference.

On his way out the door in free agency, defensive end DeMarcus Lawrence, who spent 11 years in Dallas, questioned the Cowboys' leadership and all but said that the team had no chance to win a Super Bowl. Former teammate Micah Parsons went after Lawrence on social media, suggesting the criticisms were unfounded. But facts are facts.

The Cowboys took a step back last season, going 7-10, and that led to the team and head coach Mike McCarthy parting ways. Brian Schottenheimer, the Cowboys' offensive coordinator last season, now gets a chance to try to do what Chan Gailey, Dave Campo, Bill Parcells, Wade Phillips, Jason Garrett and McCarthy couldn't do. Odds are against him.

## OFFENSE

Schottenheimer's hiring provides some stability and familiarity to the offense. But owner Jerry Jones revealed that Schottenheimer sometimes had to "bite his lip" at McCarthy's play-calling, with Schottenheimer having philosophical differences with McCarthys's scheme. Schottenheimer hired Klayton Adams as his offensive coordinator, but the head coach will call the plays. He promises more pre-snap motion and shifts, along with play-action.

The thing that will help the Dallas offense the most is keeping Dak Prescott healthy. The quarterback missed nine games last season with a serious hamstring injury that required surgery. He has missed 26 games the past five seasons. Prescott has heard the whispers that his legs aren't what they used to be after a dislocated ankle in 2020, a right calf strain in 2021 and his torn hamstring in 2024. He ran 241 times for 1,221 yards and 21 touchdowns in his first four seasons and only 179 times for 717 yards and eight touchdowns over the past five. Prescott, though, still was the 2023 MVP runner-up and led the league in touchdown passes that season, the reason the Cowboys made him the highest-paid player in the NFL. The Cowboys replaced backup Cooper Rush by trading for Joe Milton III, who will compete with Will Grier for the No. 2 job.

The Cowboys paid a big price for not addressing the running back position in free agency or the draft a year ago. Their ground attack ranked 24th in attempts, 27th in yards and last in touchdowns with Rico Dowdle and Ezekiel Elliott. The Cowboys upgraded the position this offseason by signing free agents Javonte Williams and Miles Sanders and by drafting Jaydon Blue (Texas) and Phil Mafah (Clemson). The Cowboys will run the ball more, and they believe they will run it better than they did in 2024.

Wide receiver CeeDee Lamb needed more help than he got last season, though he again showed that he was one of the top players at his position in the NFL. The Cowboys didn't get enough from Jalen Tolbert, Brandin Cooks or KaVontae Turpin, prompting a trade-deadline deal for Jonathan Mingo, who didn't do anything to contribute after arriving. The Cowboys failed to draft a receiver in April, but they did trade for George Pickens, giving Lamb a true No. 2 receiver across from him. Pickens greatly improves a wide receivers room

**CEEDEE LAMB**
WIDE RECEIVER

TIM HEITMAN-USA TODAY SPORTS

that also includes free-agent signee Parris Campbell, Tolbert, Turpin and Mingo, among others.

Tight end Jake Ferguson made the Pro Bowl in 2023 but regressed last season. In a contract year, he knows what's at stake. The Cowboys drafted Luke Schoonmaker in the second round in 2023, and he has 35 receptions for 306 yards and three touchdowns across two seasons, hardly the production the team expected.

In his fourth season, left guard Tyler Smith suddenly finds himself as the leader of the offensive line. Center Cooper Beebe and left tackle Tyler Guyton started as rookies, and they should play better this season with a year of experience. The Cowboys, though, are prepared to move Smith to left tackle in place of Guyton, and Beebe to guard, if Guyton doesn't show improvement. The Cowboys used the 12th overall pick on Alabama left guard Tyler Booker, who will move to right guard in the NFL. He has big shoes to fill in replacing the retired Zack Martin, a future Hall of Famer who was one of the best ever at his position. The Cowboys signed veteran guard Robert Jones in free agency and have Brock Hoffman returning, giving them depth inside. Terence Steele will start at right tackle for a sixth consecutive season despite efforts to upgrade the position.

## DEFENSE

For the third time in three seasons, the Cowboys have a new defensive coordinator, and for the third time in three seasons, he is a former head coach. After two-plus seasons leading the Bears, Matt Eberflus returns to Dallas, replacing Mike Zimmer, who replaced Dan Quinn. Eberflus has one of the best defensive players in the league to work with in edge rusher Micah Parsons, who has 52.5 sacks, 112 quarterback hits and nine forced fumbles across four seasons. Dante Fowler Jr. has returned after a double-digit sack season in Washington and will replace Lawrence. Sam Williams (returning from a knee injury that kept him out last season), Marshawn Kneeland and second-round pick Donovan Ezeiruaku will be part of the rotation. The Cowboys re-signed defensive tackle Osa Odighizuwa, who is a star in the making, and they have Mazi Smith and Solomon Thomas with first-round pedigrees at the nose.

The Cowboys upgraded at linebacker with a trade for Kenneth Murray Jr. and the signing of middle linebacker Jack Sanborn, who followed Eberflus from Chicago. They also drafted Florida linebacker Shemar James. But strongside linebacker DeMarvion Overshown is expected to miss the season after tearing three ligaments in his knee, which required surgery in December.

Cornerback Trevon Diggs' status is uncertain after undergoing knee surgery in January, which prompted the Cowboys to draft East Carolina's Shavon Revel Jr. in the third round. Revel is returning from a knee injury but should be ready for the start of the season. He is being counted on to start opposite DaRon Bland. Kemon Hall will replace Jourdan Lewis as the team's full-time nickelback. A trade for 2022 first-round pick Kaiir Elam has added depth to a secondary that saw multiple injuries last season. Donovan Wilson and Malik Hooker return as the starting safeties.

## SPECIALISTS

The strength of the team is its special teams. New coordinator Nick Sorensen, the 49ers' defensive coordinator last season, inherits one of the best kickers (Brandon Aubrey), punters (Bryan Anger), long-snappers (Trent Sieg) and return specialists (KaVontae Turpin) in the NFL.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Schottenheimer was the players' choice to be their head coach, and he has won over fans since replacing McCarthy. But coaching, however good, can take a team only so far. The Cowboys, who won the NFC East in 2023, were leap-frogged by the Philadelphia Eagles and the Washington Commanders last season. The Cowboys, with an upgraded roster, will have to prove they have caught up to their division rivals.

## 2024 RESULTS (7-10)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Cleveland | W | 33-17 |
| Sept. | 15 | New Orleans | L | 19-44 |
| Sept. | 22 | Baltimore | L | 25-28 |
| Sept. | 26 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 20-15 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Pittsburgh | W | 20-17 |
| Oct. | 13 | Detroit | L | 9-47 |
| Oct. | 27 | at San Francisco | L | 24-30 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Atlanta | L | 21-27 |
| Nov. | 10 | Philadelphia | L | 6-34 |
| Nov. | 18 | Houston | L | 10-34 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Washington | W | 34-26 |
| Nov. | 28 | N.Y. Giants | W | 27-20 |
| Dec. | 9 | Cincinnati | L | 20-27 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Carolina | W | 30-14 |
| Dec. | 22 | Tampa Bay | W | 26-24 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Philadelphia | L | 7-41 |
| Jan. | 5 | Washington | L | 19-23 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 327.5 | 17 | 12 |
| Rushing | 100.3 | 27 | 15 |
| Passing | 227.2 | 11 | 8 |
| Scoring | 20.6 | 21 | 12 |
| Third Down % | 36.8 | T23 | T11 |
| Points/Play | 0.317 | 26 | 14 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 355.2 | 28 | 14 |
| Rushing | 137.1 | 29 | 13 |
| Passing | 218.1 | 17 | 9 |
| Scoring | 27.5 | 31 | 15 |
| Interceptions | 13 | T12 | T5 |
| Sacks | 52 | 3 | 1 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.447 | 30 | 15 |
| TO Differential | -6 | T23 | T12 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dak Prescott | 286 | 185 | 1,978 | 11 | 8 |
| Cooper Rush | 08 | 187 | 1,844 | 12 | 5 |
| Trey Lance | 41 | 25 | 266 | 0 | 1 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rico Dowdle | 235 | 1,079 | 4.6 | 2 |
| Ezekiel Elliott | 74 | 226 | 3.1 | 3 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CeeDee Lamb | 101 | 1,194 | 11.8 | 6 |
| Jake Ferguson | 59 | 494 | 8.4 | 0 |
| Jalen Tolbert | 49 | 610 | 12.4 | 7 |
| Rico Dowdle | 39 | 249 | 6.4 | 3 |
| KaVontae Turpin | 31 | 420 | 13.5 | 2 |

**KICKING:** Brandon Aubrey, 40-47 FGs, 30-30 PATs, 150 points
**TACKLES:** Eric Kendricks, 138; DeMarvion Overshown, 90
**SACKS:** Micah Parsons, 12.0; Chauncey Golston, 5.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** 4 players tied with 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**REPLACEMENT REVEL** The Cowboys drafted East Carolina cornerback Shavon Revel Jr. with the 76th overall pick. He likely would have gone earlier if not for a torn anterior cruciate ligament that cost him all but three games last season. Dr. Dan Cooper, the Cowboys' team doctor, performed Revel's surgery. Executive vice president Stephen Jones says that Revel is likely to start training camp on the physically unable to perform list, but Revel was drafted to take over for Trevon Diggs while the veteran Pro Bowler is out with a knee injury, which could be all season.

NEW ERA
03
OL

**UP-FRONT INVESTING** The Cowboys have selected four offensive linemen in the first three rounds in the past four drafts. Three of those — Tyler Smith (24th overall in 2022), Tyler Guyton (29th in 2024) and **Tyler Booker** (12th in 2025) — were first-round selections. Center Cooper Beebe was a third-round pick in 2024. Owner Jerry Jones joked that all the high picks spent on offensive linemen should help the team be able to "tush push" this season.

**HE'S NO. 2** The Cowboys have not had a true top-flight wide receiver to pair with CeeDee Lamb since they traded Amari Cooper in 2022. Second among the team's wide receivers in catches were Noah Brown in 2022, Brandin Cooks in 2023 and Jalen Tobert in 2024 with Cooks' injury. The Cowboys finally got Lamb a running partner in a trade with Pittsburgh for George Pickens, who has averaged 62 receptions for 1,006 yards and four touchdowns in his three seasons. The Cowboys, though, gave up a third-round pick for a player who could be a one-year rental, with Pickens entering the final year of his contract.

**COWBOY LEGENDS** Offensive linemen Zack Martin and Tyron Smith, members of the 2010s All-Decade Team, both retired this offseason. Both are headed to the Cowboys Ring of Honor, owner Jerry Jones announced, and both will earn Hall of Fame induction. The two are eligible for the Class of 2030.

# SCOUTING THE COWBOYS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DALLAS

"Dak Prescott's hamstring injury ruined the Cowboys' season. Now that he's back, they can get back to the business of striking deep with CeeDee Lamb. Tight end Jake Ferguson is capable, as is Luke Schoonmaker. Having a good running game appears to be in the offing with the addition of Javonte Williams as the starter and Jaydon Blue (4.25 speed) as a third-down back and change of pace. … They'll miss Zack Martin at guard, obviously. … There's a lot of reasons to think that Tyler Booker, a 6-foot-4, 321-pound guard, can make an immediate impact. … Tyler Guyton and Terence Steele are a capable tackle duo. … It's time to pay Micah Parsons. Slighting his agent (David Mulugheta) is a power play from Jerry Jones that could wind up costing him even more money. There's no question that Parsons deserves to be one of the highest-paid non-quarterbacks. … Osa Odighizuwa got paid handsomely for his skill as an inside pass-rusher. … Dante Fowler Jr. has a knack for getting to the quarterback. … The Cowboys are putting a lot of faith in linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr., who's had a lot of injuries. … DaRon Bland is going to earn himself a payday if he keeps it up. Getting Trevon Diggs back would give the Cowboys an elite corner. … Shavon Revel Jr. should be ready by training camp after tearing his ACL in his final college season at East Carolina. … Rookie edge Donovan Ezeiruaku is a bit undersized, but it's impossible to ignore his production at Boston College."

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 COWBOYS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Grier, Will | QB | 6-1 | 215 | 5 | West Virginia | FA-24 | D3-Car-19 |
| 10 | Milton III, Joe | QB | 6-5 | 246 | 1 | Tennessee | T-NE-25 | D6b-NE-24 |
| 4 | Prescott, Dak | QB | 6-2 | 228 | 9 | Mississippi State | D4b-16 | D4b-Dal-16 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Sanders, Miles | RB | 5-11 | 211 | 6 | Penn State | FA-Car-25 | D2a-Phi-19 |
| 40 | Luepke, Hunter | FB | 6-1 | 245 | 2 | North Dakota St. | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 42 | Vaughn, Deuce | RB | 5-5 | 180 | 2 | Kansas State | D6b-23 | D6b-Dal-23 |
| 33 | Williams, Javonte | RB | 5-10 | 220 | 4 | North Carolina | FA-Den-25 | D2-Den-21 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 83 | Brooks, Jalen | WR | 6-1 | 203 | 2 | South Carolina | D7-23 | D7-Dal-23 |
| 80 | Campbell, Parris | WR | 6-1 | 205 | 6 | Ohio State | FA-Phi-25 | D2-Ind-19 |
| 16 | Cropper, Jalen | WR | 5-11 | 180 | 1 | Fresno State | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 85 | Fant, Princeton | TE | 6-2 | 250 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 87 | Ferguson, Jake | TE | 6-5 | 252 | 3 | Wisconsin | D4-22 | D4-Dal-22 |
| 80 | Flournoy, Ryan | WR | 6-1 | 202 | 1 | SE Missouri State | D6-24 | D6-Dal-24 |
| 84 | Harmon, Kelvin | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 3 | NC State | FA-24 | D6-Was-19 |
| 88 | Lamb, CeeDee | WR | 6-2 | 197 | 5 | Oklahoma | D1-20 | D1-Dal-20 |
| 81 | Mingo, Jonathan | WR | 6-2 | 220 | 2 | Ole Miss | T-Car-24 | D2-Car-23 |
| | Pickens, George | WR | 6-3 | 200 | 3 | Georgia | T-Pit-25 | D2-Pit-22 |
| 86 | Schoonmaker, Luke | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 2 | Michigan | D2-23 | D2-Dal-23 |
| 89 | Spann-Ford, Brevyn | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 1 | Minnesota | FA-24 | FA-Dal-24 |
| 81 | Stephens Jr., John | TE | 6-6 | 245 | 2 | Louisiana | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 1 | Tolbert, Jalen | WR | 6-1 | 200 | 3 | South Alabama | D3-22 | D3-Dal-22 |
| 9 | Turpin, KaVontae | WR | 5-7 | 155 | 3 | TCU | FA-22 | FA-Dal-22 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 75 | Adeniji, Hakeem | T | 6-4 | 315 | 5 | Kansas | FA-Cle-25 | D6-Cin-20 |
| 75 | Ball, Josh | T | 6-8 | 320 | 4 | Marshall | D4b-21 | D4b-Dal-21 |
| 66 | Bass, T.J. | G | 6-4 | 315 | 2 | Oregon | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 56 | Beebe, Cooper | G/C | 6-3 | 322 | 1 | Kansas State | D3a-24 | D3a-Dal-24 |
| 77 | Charles, Saahdiq | G/T | 6-4 | 322 | 4 | LSU | FA-25 | D4a-Was-20 |
| 68 | Daniels, Braeden | G | 6-4 | 297 | 2 | Utah | FA-24 | D4-Was-23 |
| 60 | Guyton, Tyler | T | 6-7 | 322 | 1 | Oklahoma | D1-24 | D1-Dal-24 |
| 67 | Hoffman, Brock | C | 6-4 | 315 | 2 | Virginia Tech | FA-22 | FA-Cle-22 |
| 65 | Jones, Robert | G | 6-4 | 321 | 4 | Middle Tennessee | FA-Mia-25 | FA-Mia-21 |
| 76 | Richards, Asim | T | 6-4 | 315 | 2 | North Carolina | D5-23 | D5-Dal-23 |
| 63 | Shepley, Dakoda | G | 6-4 | 290 | 3 | British Columbia | FA-23 | FA-NYJ-18 |
| 73 | Smith, Tyler | G/T | 6-5 | 320 | 3 | Tulsa | D1-22 | D1-Dal-22 |
| 78 | Steele, Terence | T | 6-6 | 320 | 5 | Texas Tech | FA-20 | FA-Dal-20 |
| 62 | Thomas, Nate | G/T | 6-5 | 332 | 1 | Louisiana | D7a-24 | D7a-Dal-24 |
| 79 | Waletzko, Matt | T | 6-8 | 320 | 3 | North Dakota | D5a-22 | D5a-Dal-22 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 51 | Brown IV, Earnest | DE | 6-5 | 270 | 1 | Northwestern | FA-25 | D5-LAR-21 |
| 95 | Daxon, Denzel | DT | 6-2 | 304 | 1 | Illinois | FA-24 | FA-Dal-24 |
| 3 | Fowler Jr., Dante | DE | 6-3 | 261 | 9 | Florida | FA-Was-25 | D1-Jac-15 |
| 94 | Kneeland, Marshawn | DE | 6-3 | 267 | 1 | Western Michigan | D2-24 | D2-Dal-24 |
| 97 | Odighizuwa, Osa | DT | 6-2 | 294 | 4 | UCLA | D3a-21 | D3a-Dal-21 |
| 11 | Parsons, Micah | DE | 6-3 | 250 | 4 | Penn State | D1-21 | D1-Dal-21 |
| 96 | Rogers, Justin | DT | 6-2 | 322 | 1 | Auburn | PS-Cin-24 | D7-Dal-24 |
| 58 | Smith, Mazi | DT | 6-3 | 328 | 2 | Michigan | D1-23 | D1-Dal-23 |
| 90 | Thomas, Solomon | DL | 6-3 | 295 | 8 | Stanford | FA-NYJ-25 | D1a-SF-17 |
| 98 | Turner, Payton | DE | 6-6 | 270 | 4 | Houston | FA-NO-25 | D1-NO-21 |
| 53 | Vilain, Luiji | DE | 6-4 | 250 | 3 | Wake Forest | FA-24 | FA-Dal-22 |
| 91 | Wheat, Tyrus | DE | 6-2 | 263 | 2 | Mississippi State | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 54 | Williams, Sam | DE | 6-4 | 262 | 3 | Ole Miss | D2-22 | D2-Dal-22 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Clark, Damone | LB | 6-2 | 245 | 3 | LSU | D5c-22 | D5c-Dal-22 |
| 47 | Harris, Darius | LB | 6-2 | 238 | 5 | Middle Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-Dal-19 |
| 57 | Johnson, Buddy | LB | 6-2 | 240 | 2 | Texas A&M | FA-23 | D4-Pit-21 |
| 35 | Liufau, Marist | LB | 6-2 | 234 | 1 | Notre Dame | D3b-24 | D3b-Dal-24 |
| 59 | Murray Jr., Kenneth | LB | 6-2 | 241 | 5 | Oklahoma | T-Ten-25 | D1b-LAC-20 |
| 13 | Overshown, DeMarvion | LB | 6-3 | 230 | 2 | Texas | D3-23 | D3-Dal-23 |
| 57 | Sanborn, Jack | LB | 6-2 | 234 | 3 | Wisconsin | FA-Chi-25 | FA-Chi-22 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | Barcoo, Luq | CB | 6-1 | 180 | 2 | San Diego State | FA-25 | FA-Jac-20 |
| 14 | Bell, Markquese | S | 6-2 | 218 | 3 | Florida A&M | FA-22 | FA-Dal-22 |
| 26 | Bland, DaRon | CB | 6-2 | 202 | 3 | Fresno State | D5b-22 | D5b-Dal-22 |
| 25 | Booth, Andrew | CB | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | Clemson | T-Min-24 | D2a-Min-22 |
| 31 | Butler, Josh | CB | 6-0 | 186 | 1 | Michigan State | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 21 | Carson, Caelen | CB | 6-0 | 193 | 1 | Wake Forest | D5-24 | D5-Dal-24 |
| 7 | Diggs, Trevon | CB | 6-1 | 204 | 5 | Alabama | D2-20 | D2-Dal-20 |
| 20 | Elam, Kaiir | CB | 6-2 | 200 | 3 | Florida | T-Buf-25 | D1-Buf-22 |
| 29 | Goodwin, C.J. | CB | 6-3 | 195 | 9 | California (Pa.) | PS-Cin-18 | FA-Pit-14 |
| 43 | Hall, Kemon | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 2 | North Texas | W-SF-24 | FA-LAC-19 |
| 28 | Hooker, Malik | S | 6-1 | 215 | 8 | Ohio State | FA-21 | D1-Ind-17 |
| 24 | Mukuamu, Israel | S | 6-4 | 215 | 4 | South Carolina | D6b-21 | D6b-Dal-21 |
| 32 | Pride Jr., Troy | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 3 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | D4-Car-20 |
| 30 | Thomas, Juanyeh | S | 6-1 | 215 | 2 | Georgia Tech | FA-22 | FA-Dal-22 |
| 6 | Wilson, Donovan | S | 6-0 | 205 | 6 | Texas A&M | D6-19 | D6-Dal-19 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | Anger, Bryan | P | 6-3 | 214 | 13 | Cal | FA-21 | D3-Jac-12 |
| 17 | Aubrey, Brandon | K | 6-3 | 208 | 2 | Notre Dame | FA-23 | FA-Dal-23 |
| 44 | Sieg, Trent | LS | 6-3 | 240 | 7 | Colorado State | FA-LV-23 | FA-Bal-18 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 1 | Jalen Tolbert | 81 | Jonathan Mingo |
| WR | 88 | CeeDee Lamb | 80 | Parris Campbell |
| WR | | George Pickens | 9 | KaVontae Turpin |
| LT | 60 | Tyler Guyton | 69 | Ajani Cornelius (R) |
| LG | 73 | Tyler Smith | 65 | Robert Jones |
| C | 56 | Cooper Beebe | 67 | Brock Hoffman |
| RG | 52 | Tyler Booker (R) | 66 | T.J. Bass |
| RT | 78 | Terence Steele | 79 | Matt Waletzko |
| TE | 87 | Jake Ferguson | 86 | Luke Schoonmaker |
| QB | 4 | Dak Prescott | 10 | Joe Milton III |
| RB | 33 | Javonte Williams | 27 | Miles Sanders |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 11 | Micah Parsons | 41 | Donovan Ezeiruaku (R) |
| DT | 97 | Osa Odighizuwa | 90 | Solomon Thomas |
| DT | 58 | Mazi Smith | 93 | Jay Toia (R) |
| DE | 3 | Dante Fowler Jr. | 94 | Marshawn Kneeland |
| MLB | 59 | Kenneth Murray Jr. | 35 | Marist Liufau |
| WLB | 57 | Jack Sanborn | 50 | Shemar James (R) |
| CB | 27 | Shavon Revel Jr. (R) | 21 | Caelen Carson |
| CB | 26 | DaRon Bland | 20 | Kaiir Elam |
| NB | 20 | Kaiir Elam | 43 | Kemon Hall |
| SS | 6 | Donovan Wilson | 24 | Israel Mukuamu |
| FS | 28 | Malik Hooker | 14 | Markquese Ball |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 17 | Brandon Aubrey | KR | 9 | KaVontae Turpin |
| P | 5 | Bryan Anger | PR | 9 | KaVontae Turpin |

**21.3%**

Dak Prescott threw into a tight window on a league-high 21.3% of his passes per NFL Next Gen Stats. Only one other qualifying quarterback (Aidan O'Connell) was above 20%.

# COWBOYS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tyler Booker | G | 6-4 | 321 | Alabama |
| 2 | Donovan Ezeiruaku | DE | 6-2 | 248 | Boston College |
| 3 | Shavon Revel Jr. | CB | 6-1 | 194 | East Carolina |
| 5 | Jaydon Blue | RB | 5-9 | 196 | Texas |
| 5 | Shemar James | LB | 6-1 | 222 | Florida |
| 6 | Ajani Cornelius | OT | 6-4 | 310 | Oregon |
| 7 | Jay Toia | DT | 6-2 | 342 | UCLA |
| 7 | Phil Mafah | RB | 6-0 | 234 | Clemson |
| 7 | Tommy Akingbesote | DT | 6-3 | 306 | Maryland |

Tyler Booker was the highest-rated player on the Cowboys' board and fills a huge need after Zack Martin's retirement. Corner Shavon Revel Jr. is the only other draft pick besides Booker who is being counted on to start. He will replace Trevon Diggs, who is expected to miss the entire season with a knee injury. Second-round defensive end Donovan Ezeiruaku will join the pass-rush rotation after recording 16.5 sacks last season at Boston College. Florida's Shemar James could provide much needed depth at linebacker. At 342 pounds, Jay Toia is the big-bodied defensive tackle the Cowboys covet. Sixth-rounder Ajani Cornelius will compete for the swing tackle job. Third-day running backs Jaydon Blue and Phil Mafah have a chance to contribute as rookies.

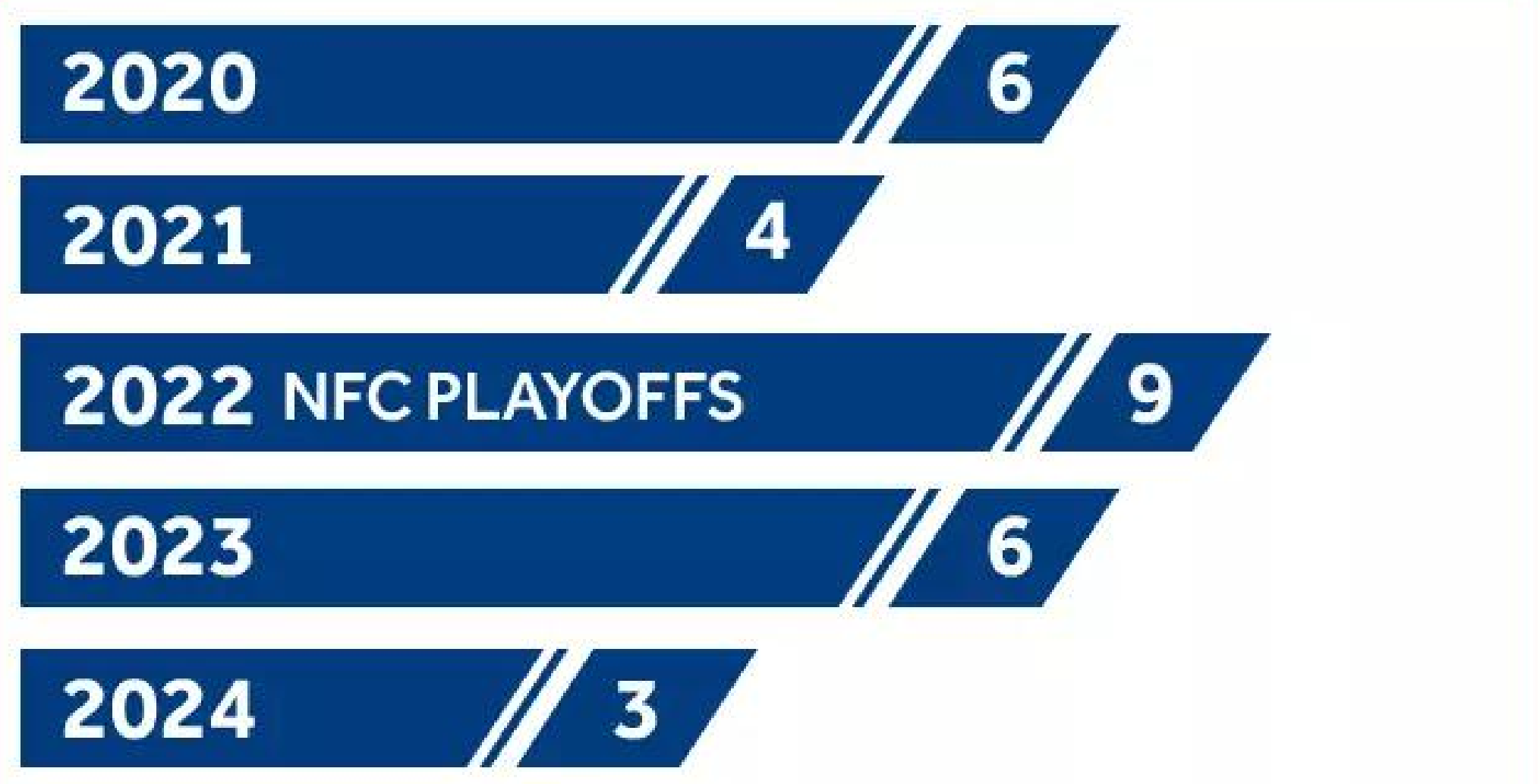
# GIANTS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Washington | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Dallas | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Kansas City | 8:20 |
| Sept. 28 | L.A. Chargers | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Oct. 9 | Philadelphia | 8:15 |
| Oct. 19 | at Denver | 4:05 |
| Oct. 26 | at Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | San Francisco | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | at Chicago | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at Detroit | 1:00 |
| Dec. 1 | at New England | 8:15 |
| Dec. 7 | BYE | |
| Dec. 14 | Washington | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | Minnesota | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Las Vegas | |
| TBD | Dallas | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Brian Daboll
**Record With Team:** 18-32-1
**Career Record:** 18-32-1
**Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator:** Mike Kafka
**Defensive Coordinator:** Shane Bowen
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Michael Ghobrial
**Offensive Passing Game Coordinator/ Quarterbacks:** Shea Tierney
**Running Backs:** Ladell Betts
**Wide Receivers:** Mike Groh
**Tight Ends:** Tim Kelly
**Offensive Line:** Carmen Bricillo
**Defensive Line:** Andre Patterson
**Inside Linebackers:** John Egorugwu
**Outside Linebackers:** Charlie Bullen
**Secondary Pass Game Coordinator:** Marquand Manuel
**Cornerbacks:** Jeff Burris

NFC EAST FORECAST
4

Three years into the remaking of the Giants, things aren't going well for head coach Brian Daboll and general manager Joe Schoen. After a surprising playoff berth in Year 1, they've gone 9-25 over the past two seasons. And even co-owner John K. Mara admitted he's "just about run out of patience" after they went 3-14 last year.

And while he wouldn't say if this is a win-or-else season for Daboll and Schoen, Mara made it clear in January that if they are going to have any future with the franchise, "I'm going to have to be in a better mood this time next year than I am right now."

The good news is that his mood has already improved after a very productive offseason that started with the signing of competent quarterbacks Russell Wilson and Jameis Winston. The Giants also added depth to their offensive line and strengthened their defense, restoring some hope to a franchise that has suffered double-digit losses nine times in the last 11 years.

Hope will only go so far, of course, in a stacked NFC East that includes the defending Super Bowl champions. But considering how low their bar currently is, some competitive football and a meaningful game or two after Thanksgiving might be more than enough to make Mara's mood soar.

## OFFENSE

Daboll has long been convinced that the Giants' offensive issues have been all about the incompetence of their recent quarterbacks (Daniel Jones, Tyrod Taylor, Tommy DeVito and others). If he's right, things could change quickly now that he's got veteran Wilson running the show. The 36-year-old's best days are behind him, but he's still got a strong arm and looked mostly good in Pittsburgh last year. He can still move a little, too.

And Wilson certainly has a lot of weapons to work with. Malik Nabers looked like an elite receiver as a rookie last season — the kind of No. 1 who has a rare combination of strength and breakaway ability. He's a bit of a lone wolf in the passing game, but the Giants do hope that the underrated Darius Slayton and Wan'Dale Robinson will improve as alternative options with better quarterback play. Robinson, in particular, has speed and elusiveness that the Giants have barely tapped yet.

They also can support Wilson with a solid running game powered by an improved offensive line — something they've rarely had in recent years. They are hopeful that All-Pro left tackle Andrew Thomas can stay healthy, and they added a small army of veterans for depth just in case any of their starters get injured. That will help a young backfield led by Tyrone Tracy Jr. and rookie Cam Skattebo, who the Giants think can be a Christian McCaffrey-like weapon in what likely will be a part-time role.

## DEFENSE

The Giants never forgot that their last two Super Bowl runs were really powered by a wave of pass-rushers. They've always felt that disrupting the opposing quarterback was just as important as their own quarterback play. Now they might actually have a defense that can do that.

One year after giving edge rusher Brian Burns a five-year, $141 contract so he could form a dynamic pass rushing duo with Kayvon Thibodeaux, the Giants added more to the mix. They used the third overall pick to take the best defensive player in the draft — Penn State edge rusher Abdul Carter — giving

**MALIK NABERS**
WIDE RECEIVER

VINCENT CARCHIETTA-IMAGN IMAGES

their pass rush uncommon depth. That includes the push they get from one of the best pass-rushing defensive tackles in the league — All-Pro Dexter Lawrence II, who gets significant help from both veteran Rakeem Nuñez-Roches and, the team hopes, third-rounder Darius Alexander.

Few teams can send six men at the quarterback in waves like that, with a combination of power and speed. It's as deep a D-line as there is in the league.

Of course, that doesn't help a ton if the secondary is weak, as it often was for the Giants last season. But they spent the offseason fixing that, too. They signed veteran cornerback Paulson Adebo, an underrated player who should help Deonte Banks, the Giants' erratic 2023 first-round pick who too often struggled in coverage and effort. And they'll really get help from new safety Jevon Holland, an aggressive player with a nose for finding the football.

So the Giants could be downright dangerous up front and better than they've been in the back. It might not be an elite defense, but it has the potential to be close.

## SPECIALISTS

Time is starting to catch up with kicker Graham Gano, who is 38 and has missed 16 games over the past two years with injuries. When he has played, he's been a shell of his former self, making just 20-of-28 field goals (71.4%) over the past two seasons.

The Giants are giving him another year, though. He was 9-of-11 last season, and they believe he'll be healthy by Week 1. When he is, he's usually one of the most reliable kickers in the league.

They feel the same about punter Jamie Gillan, who has proven to be an accurate kicker with a strong leg. He's shown a little decline over the past two years, but the Giants feel comfortable enough with "The Scottish Hammer" to sign him to a new three-year deal.

And they feel just as comfortable with their return specialist, the well-travelled Ihmir Smith-Marsette. The Giants became his fifth team in four NFL seasons after he was cut by the Carolina Panthers after training camp last summer. Signed primarily as a punt returner, he settled in on kickoffs late last season, too, showing off his speed and elusiveness by averaging an impressive 34.6 yards on 11 returns, including one that went for 100 yards and a touchdown.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

It's probably a good thing that Mara set the bar at an improved "mood" rather than a playoff berth because the latter could be hard to come by for this team. They are still, by any measure, the fourth-best team in the NFC East, and they have a big gap to close on the other three.

Still, they should be much-improved. Wilson will restore competence to an offense that really has suffered through some terrible quarterback play the past two years. And he has a decent array of weapons around him with Nabers, especially. They'll have to lean on him heavily, but he looked capable of handling that load.

It's the defense, though, that could take real leaps from a unit that ranked 24th last season. They have as deep a pass rush as any team in the NFL, and they really strengthened their back end with the additions of Adebo and Holland. It's not an elite secondary by any stretch, but that potentially fierce pass rush will really help them look good.

With a much-improved defense and a competent offense, the Giants look like a .500 team that, with a little luck, good health and some improvement from key players, could even hang around the fringe of the playoff chase. They're not close to being better than the Philadelphia Eagles, Washington Commanders or even the Dallas Cowboys, though. Making a run at mediocre might be the best they can hope for. But that should be enough to improve the boss' mood.

## 2024 RESULTS (3-14)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Minnesota | L | 6-28 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Washington | L | 18-21 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Cleveland | W | 21-15 |
| Sept. | 26 | Dallas | L | 15-20 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Seattle | W | 29-20 |
| Oct. | 13 | Cincinnati | L | 7-17 |
| Oct. | 20 | Philadelphia | L | 3-28 |
| Oct. | 28 | at Pittsburgh | L | 18-26 |
| Nov. | 3 | Washington | L | 22-27 |
| Nov. | 10 | Carolina (ot) | L | 17-20 |
| Nov. | 24 | Tampa Bay | L | 7-30 |
| Nov. | 28 | at Dallas | L | 20-27 |
| Dec. | 8 | New Orleans | L | 11-14 |
| Dec. | 15 | Baltimore | L | 14-35 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Atlanta | L | 7-34 |
| Dec. | 29 | Indianapolis | W | 45-33 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Philadelphia | L | 13-20 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 294.8 | 30 | 15 |
| Rushing | 104.9 | 23 | 12 |
| Passing | 189.9 | 28 | 14 |
| Scoring | 16.1 | 31 | 16 |
| Third Down % | 35.3 | 27 | 14 |
| Points/Play | 0.257 | 31 | 16 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 346.8 | 24 | 11 |
| Rushing | 136.2 | 27 | 11 |
| Passing | 210.6 | 8 | 4 |
| Scoring | 24.4 | 21 | 12 |
| Interceptions | 5 | 31 | 16 |
| Sacks | 45 | T8 | T4 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.395 | 23 | 11 |
| TO Differential | -8 | 26 | 15 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daniel Jones | 341 | 216 | 2,070 | 8 | 7 |
| Drew Lock | 81 | 107 | 1,071 | 6 | 5 |
| Tommy DeVito | 44 | 31 | 257 | 0 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tyrone Tracy Jr. | 192 | 839 | 4.4 | 5 |
| Devin Singletary | 113 | 437 | 3.9 | 4 |
| Daniel Jones | 67 | 265 | 4.0 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Malik Nabers | 109 | 1,204 | 11.0 | 7 |
| Wan'Dale Robinson | 93 | 699 | 7.5 | 3 |
| Darius Slayton | 39 | 573 | 14.7 | 2 |
| Tyrone Tracy Jr. | 38 | 284 | 7.5 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Greg Joseph, 13-16 FGs, 6-6 PATs, 45 points
Graham Gano, 9-11 FGs, 15-15 PATs, 42 points
**TACKLES:** Micah McFadden, 107; Tyler Nubin, 98
**SACKS:** Dexter Lawrence, 9.0; Brian Burns, 8.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** 5 players tied with 1

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**NUMBERS GAME** New Giants edge rusher **Abdul Carter** clearly isn't afraid of making an impact. After he was drafted, he made it clear he was interested in wearing No. 56 — a number that hasn't been worn by a Giant since the great Lawrence Taylor retired. Taylor, though, told him no and that he should choose his own number "and then make it famous." Carter wore No. 11 in college, but he isn't getting that, either. That's another retired number for the Giants, worn by former quarterback Phil Simms.

CARTER
1
DART
1

THOMAS SALUS-IMAGN IMAGES

**LISTEN TO THE KID** One year ago, as chronicled on HBO's "Hard Knocks," general manager Joe Schoen's son, Carson, famously told him he should trade up in the 2024 draft to get quarterback Jayden Daniels. Clearly the kid knew what he was talking about. Maybe it was a coincidence, but the day before the 2025 draft, Carson posted highlights of Ole Miss quarterback **Jaxson Dart** on Instagram. This time, his father granted his apparent wish, trading back into the first round to draft Dart 25th overall.

**MEDIA SAVVY** Russell Wilson's backup might be the team's biggest personality. Jameis Winston also signed with New York, where he is likely to be a media star. Most recently, he was a special digital correspondent for FOX Sports at Super Bowl LIX. He won a "Webby Award" — essentially the Oscars of the internet — for "Sports Individual Creator" for all the videos he created that week.

**BAD CALL** The Giants took a lot of heat for not re-signing Saquon Barkley. Turns out that decision was even worse than anyone expected. The Giants had three running backs last season combine for 1,307 yards. That was 698 yards fewer than Barkley had despite missing one game. Barkley averaged nearly 50 yards more per game (125.3) than the Giants' backs did combined (76.9).

# SCOUTING THE GIANTS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK

"Combining one of the best deep-ball throwers in the league in Russell Wilson with one of the most dangerous deep threats in Malik Nabers was a smart move. Backstopping Wilson with Jameis Winston gives the Giants a solid backup option. … Wilson still has something left, but his consistency isn't what it used to be. … The mobility and arm talent of rookie Jaxson Dart gives the Giants hope for the future. Wilson's presence means they won't have to rush Dart onto the field. … Retaining Darius Slayton makes sense, considering his speed and YAC skills. … Andrew Thomas and John Michael Schmitz Jr. are the best parts of a below-average offensive line. … The running game isn't quite enough to make defenses respect play-action fakes. Marcus Mbow could earn a starting job pretty quickly, maybe even by the season opener. … Dexter Lawrence II is tough to budge in the middle of the defense, and he busts through blocks as one of the best interior pass-rushers in the game. … Drafting Abdul Carter as a bookend edge opposite Brian Burns could be a formidable tandem. Once he's fully healthy, Carter has the size and speed to be a game-wrecking presence. … Bobby Okereke is the best linebacker on the squad. There really isn't any depth at the position. … Adding safety Jevon Holland gives the Giants a ball-hawking center fielder. They sorely needed to improve in the secondary after not adequately replacing Xavier McKinney last year. … Joe Schoen and Brian Daboll have to turn this around soon, or they'll be on the chopping block."

# 2025 GIANTS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 DeVito, Tommy | QB | 6-2 | 210 | 2 | Illinois | FA-23 | FA-NYG-23 |
| 3 Wilson, Russell | QB | 5-11 | 215 | 13 | Wisconsin | FA-Pit-25 | D3-Sea-12 |
| 19 Winston, Jameis | QB | 6-4 | 230 | 10 | Florida State | FA-Cle-25 | D1-TB-15 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Gray, Eric | RB | 5-10 | 211 | 2 | Oklahoma | D5-23 | D5-NYG-23 |
| 25 Miller, Dante | RB | 5-9 | 200 | 1 | South Carolina | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 26 Singletary, Devin | RB | 5-7 | 203 | 6 | Florida Atlantic | FA-Hou-24 | D3a-Buf-19 |
| 29 Tracy Jr., Tyrone | RB | 5-11 | 210 | 1 | Purdue | D5-24 | D5-NYG-24 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 82 Bellinger, Daniel | TE | 6-6 | 255 | 3 | San Diego State | D4-22 | D4-NYG-22 |
| 89 Dulcich, Greg | TE | 6-4 | 245 | 3 | UCLA | W-Den-24 | D3-Den-22 |
| 88 Ford-Wheaton, Bryce | WR | 6-3 | 220 | 2 | West Virginia | FA-23 | FA-NYG-23 |
| 81 Humphrey, Lil'Jordan | WR | 6-4 | 225 | 6 | Texas | FA-Den-25 | FA-NO-19 |
| 13 Hyatt, Jalin | WR | 6-0 | 185 | 2 | Tennessee | D3-23 | D3-NYG-23 |
| 84 Johnson, Theo | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 1 | Penn State | D4-24 | D4-NYG-24 |
| 85 Manhertz, Chris | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 9 | Canisius | FA-Den-24 | FA-Buf-14 |
| 1 Nabers, Malik | WR | 6-0 | 200 | 1 | LSU | D1-24 | D1-NYG-24 |
| 83 Pascal, Zach | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 7 | Old Dominion | FA-Ari-25 | FA-Was-17 |
| 17 Robinson, Wan'Dale | WR | 5-8 | 185 | 3 | Kentucky | D2-22 | D2-NYG-22 |
| 18 Slayton, Darius | WR | 6-1 | 198 | 6 | Auburn | D5-19 | D5-NYG-19 |
| 87 Smith-Marsette, Ihmir | WR | 6-1 | 185 | 4 | Iowa | FA-24 | D5-Min-21 |
| 80 Washington, Montrell | WR | 5-10 | 170 | 3 | Samford | FA-25 | D5-Den-22 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72 Eluemunor, Jermaine | T | 6-4 | 330 | 8 | Texas A&M | FA-LV-24 | D5-Bal-17 |
| 75 Ezeudu, Joshua | OL | 6-4 | 310 | 3 | North Carolina | D3-22 | D3-NYG-22 |
| 70 Forsythe, Stone | T | 6-8 | 314 | 4 | Florida | FA-Sea-25 | D6-Sea-21 |
| 60 Hudson, Bryan | C | 6-5 | 301 | 1 | Louisville | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 55 Hudson III, James | T | 6-5 | 313 | 4 | Cincinnati | FA-Cle-25 | D4a-Cle-21 |
| 63 Kubas, Jake | G | 6-4 | 308 | 1 | North Dakota St. | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 67 Morrissey, Jimmy | C | 6-3 | 305 | 3 | Pitt | FA-24 | D7-LV-21 |
| 73 Neal, Evan | T/G | 6-7 | 340 | 3 | Alabama | D1-22 | D1-NYG-22 |
| 76 Runyan Jr., Jon | G | 6-4 | 307 | 5 | Michigan | FA-GB-24 | D6a-GB-20 |
| 65 Schlottmann, Austin | G | 6-6 | 300 | 6 | TCU | FA-Min-24 | FA-Den-18 |
| 61 Schmitz Jr., John M. | C | 6-4 | 320 | 2 | Minnesota | D2-23 | D2-NYG-23 |
| 64 Stinnie, Aaron | G | 6-3 | 312 | 7 | James Madison | FA-TB-24 | FA-Ten-18 |
| 78 Thomas, Andrew | T | 6-5 | 315 | 5 | Georgia | D1-20 | D1-NYG-20 |
| 74 Van Roten, Greg | G | 6-3 | 305 | 10 | Penn | FA-24 | FA-GB-12 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 94 Chatman, Elijah | DT | 6-0 | 278 | 1 | SMU | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 98 Davidson, D.J. | DL | 6-5 | 320 | 3 | Arizona State | D5-22 | D5-NYG-22 |
| 69 Durden, Cory | DT | 6-4 | 316 | 2 | NC State | FA-24 | FA-Det-23 |
| 90 Garcia, Elijah | DL | 6-5 | 302 | 2 | Rice | FA-24 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 97 Lawrence II, Dexter | DL | 6-4 | 340 | 6 | Clemson | D1-19 | D1-NYG-19 |
| 96 Ledbetter, Jeremiah | DT | 6-3 | 299 | 8 | Arkansas | FA-Jac-25 | D6-Det-17 |
| 93 Nuñez-Roches, R. | DL | 6-2 | 305 | 10 | Southern Miss | FA-TB-23 | D6-KC-15 |
| 95 Riley, Jordon | DT | 6-5 | 315 | 2 | Oregon | D7-23 | D7-NYG-23 |
| 99 Robertson-Harris, R. | DT | 6-5 | 290 | 9 | UTEP | FA-Sea-25 | FA-Chi-16 |
| 5 Thibodeaux, Kayvon | DE | 6-5 | 258 | 3 | Oregon | D1-22 | D1-NYG-22 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 49 Board, Chris | ILB | 6-2 | 240 | 7 | North Dakota St. | FA-Bal-25 | FA-Bal-18 |
| 0 Burns, Brian | OLB | 6-5 | 250 | 6 | Florida State | T-Car-24 | D1-Car-19 |
| 52 Dimukeje, Victor | LB | 6-2 | 262 | 4 | Duke | FA-Ari-25 | D6a-Ari-21 |
| 44 Flannigan-Fowles, D. | LB | 6-2 | 223 | 5 | Arizona | FA-SF-25 | FA-SF-19 |
| 45 Fox, Tomon | OLB | 6-2 | 245 | 3 | North Carolina | FA-22 | FA-NYG-22 |
| 57 Golston, Chauncey | OLB | 6-5 | 285 | 4 | Iowa | FA-Dal-25 | D3b-Dal-21 |
| 54 Johnson, Dyontae | ILB | 6-2 | 230 | 1 | Toledo | FA-23 | FA-NYG-23 |
| 41 McFadden, Micah | ILB | 6-2 | 232 | 3 | Indiana | D5-22 | D5-NYG-22 |
| 53 Muasau, Darius | ILB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | UCLA | D6-24 | D6-NYG-24 |
| 58 Okereke, Bobby | ILB | 6-2 | 235 | 6 | Stanford | FA-Ind-23 | D3-Ind-19 |
| 47 Summers, Ty | LB | 6-1 | 240 | 6 | TCU | FA-24 | D7-GB-19 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 Adebo, Paulson | CB | 6-1 | 192 | 4 | Stanford | FA-NO-25 | D3-NO-21 |
| 3 Banks, Deonte | CB | 6-2 | 200 | 2 | Maryland | D1-23 | D1-NYG-23 |
| 24 Belton, Dane | S | 6-1 | 190 | 3 | Iowa | D4-22 | D4-NYG-22 |
| 28 Flott, Cor'Dale | CB | 6-2 | 175 | 3 | LSU | D3-22 | D3-NYG-22 |
| 35 Green, Art | CB | 6-1 | 201 | 1 | Houston | FA-24 | FA-Den-23 |
| 37 Hawkins III, Tre | CB | 6-3 | 195 | 2 | Old Dominion | D6-23 | D6-NYG-23 |
| 8 Holland, Jevón | S | 6-1 | 205 | 4 | Oregon | FA-Mia-25 | D2a-Mia-21 |
| 23 Johnson Jr., Anthony | S | 6-0 | 205 | 2 | Iowa State | W-GB-24 | D7c-GB-23 |
| 31 Jones, Nic | CB | 6-0 | 189 | 2 | Ball State | FA-25 | D7-KC-23 |
| 43 Layne, Raheem | S | 5-11 | 192 | 3 | Indiana | FA-24 | FA-LAC-22 |
| 27 Nubin, Tyler | S | 6-1 | 199 | 1 | Minnesota | D2-24 | D2-NYG-24 |
| 22 Phillips, Dru | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Kentucky | D3-24 | D3-NYG-24 |
| 33 Williams, Dee | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 1 | Tennessee | W-Sea-24 | FA-Sea-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 Gano, Graham | K | 6-2 | 202 | 15 | Florida State | FA-20 | FA-Bal-09 |
| 6 Gillan, Jamie | P | 6-1 | 207 | 6 | Arkansas-Pine Bluff | FA-22 | FA-Cle-19 |
| 59 Kreiter, Casey | LS | 6-1 | 250 | 9 | Iowa | FA-Den-20 | FA-Dal-14 |
| 99 McAtamney, Jude | K | 6-2 | 205 | 1 | Rutgers | FA-24 | FA-NYG-24 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 1 | Malik Nabers | 83 | Zach Pascal |
| WR | 18 | Darius Slayton | 13 | Jalin Hyatt |
| WR | 17 | Wan'Dale Robinson | 81 | Lil'Jordan Humphrey |
| LT | 78 | Andrew Thomas | 55 | James Hudson III |
| LG | 76 | Jon Runyan Jr. | 64 | Aaron Stinnie |
| C | 61 | John Michael Schmitz Jr. | 65 | Austin Schlottmann |
| RG | 74 | Greg Van Roten | 75 | Joshua Ezeudu |
| RT | 72 | Jermaine Eluemunor | 73 | Evan Neal |
| TE | 84 | Theo Johnson | 82 | Daniel Bellinger |
| QB | 3 | Russell Wilson | 19 | Jameis Winston |
| RB | 29 | Tyrone Tracy Jr. | 44 | Cam Skattebo (R) |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 99 | Roy Robertson-Harris | 94 | Elijah Chatman |
| DT | 97 | Dexter Lawrence II | 96 | Jeremiah Ledbetter |
| DE | 93 | Rakeem Nuñez-Roches | 91 | Darius Alexander (R) |
| OLB | 0 | Brian Burns | 57 | Chauncey Golston |
| ILB | 58 | Bobby Okereke | 49 | Chris Board |
| ILB | 41 | Micah McFadden | 53 | Darius Muasau |
| OLB | 5 | Kayvon Thibodeaux | 51 | Abdul Carter (R) |
| CB | 2 | Deonte Banks | 28 | Cor'Dale Flott |
| CB | 21 | Paulson Adebo | 22 | Dru Phillips |
| SS | 27 | Tyer Nubin | 24 | Dane Belton |
| FS | 8 | Jevon Holland | 23 | Anthony Johnson Jr. |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 9 | Graham Gano | KR | 87 | Ihmir Smith-Marsette |
| P | 6 | Jamie Gillan | PR | 87 | Ihmir Smith-Marsette |

**15**

The Giants threw a league-low 15 touchdown passes. It was the second straight season they threw exactly 15 passing touchdowns.

## GIANTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Abdul Carter | Edge | 6-3 | 252 | Penn State |
| 1 | Jaxson Dart | QB | 6-2 | 223 | Ole Miss |
| 3 | Darius Alexander | DT | 6-4 | 310 | Toledo |
| 4 | Cam Skattebo | RB | 5-11 | 215 | Arizona State |
| 5 | Marcus Mbow | OL | 6-5 | 300 | Purdue |
| 7 | Thomas Fidone II | TE | 6-6 | 255 | Nebraska |

The draft couldn't have gone much better for embattled general manager Joe Schoen, starting with grabbing the best pass-rusher in the draft in Abdul Carter, who'll immediately be part of what is now a fierce front line. It'll also include defensive tackle Darius Alexander, who'll be a part of a rotation and could take a lot of pressure off All-Pro DT Dexter Lawrence II. But Schoen's best move might have been trading back into the first round for Jaxson Dart, the Giants' quarterback of the future. He'll sit this year, but he's the projected starter for 2026. Meanwhile, running back Cam Skattebo is a Christian McCaffrey-like weapon who should split the backfield duties with Tyrone Tracy Jr. and help make the Giants a more dangerous offensive team.

# PHI EAGLES

NFC EAST FORECAST

1

While Eagles fans continue to get tattoos commemorating last year's Super Bowl triumph, demand that statues be commissioned throughout the city to honor their heroes and name their children Saquon, Jalen, Nick and even Howie, the franchise must move forward, comfortable in its defending champion status but knowing that it means nothing during the 2025 season.

The Birds will attempt for a repeat title performance with plenty of key pieces back, like 2,000-yard back Saquon Barkley, quarterback Jalen Hurts, wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith and defensive tackle Jalen Carter — to name a few. But Philadelphia has some holes to fill, and thanks to a tight salary cap situation, general manager Howie Roseman wasn't able to make any big-time signings during the offseason. But the Eagles added some promising talent in the draft and expect some of last year's reserves to step forward this year.

## OFFENSE

It will be interesting to see if new offensive coordinator Kevin Patullo continues to emphasize the running game, something that was hugely successful last year.

New York Giants fans agonized throughout the season as Barkley piled up 2,005 rushing yards, scored 15 total touchdowns and was the focal point of a run-based Eagles offense. Most importantly, he stayed healthy all year and was one of the league's most dangerous weapons. There is no reason to believe he can't have another huge year, provided he stays healthy.

Barkley has strength between the tackles and breakaway ability. Last year, he carried the ball a league-leading 345 times. The Eagles added former Green Bay Packer A.J. Dillon for depth, but his yards-per-carry average has dropped in each of the past three seasons, and he missed all of 2024 due to a neck injury. Second-year man Will Shipley will get a chance to take the main backup role.

Hurts returns after a fascinating season that featured his fewest passing yards since he became a full-time starter in 2021 but only five interceptions — 10 fewer than he had in '24 — and a career-best 68.7% completion rate. In the postseason, he connected on 71.4% of his passes, threw for five scores and ran for another five. He's not going to throw for 400 yards too often, but on this team, he doesn't have to. Hurts has big-play potential with his arm and legs.

After catching 106 passes in 2023, Brown had something of a "down" year, grabbing 67 and scoring seven times while averaging 16.1 yards per catch. He missed four games and was also targeted fewer times, thanks to the team's emphasis on the run, but he remains a full-service wideout capable of being productive across the middle and down the field. Smith had another strong year, snaring 68 balls and scoring eight times, though his yards-per-catch average dropped to 12.3. But as he showed by catching a dagger long ball in the Super Bowl win over the Kansas City Chiefs, he is still a deep threat.

Receiver depth is an issue. Jahan Dotson averaged 11.4 yards on 19 catches last year and didn't score. Second-year men Johnny Wilson and Ainais Smith did not distinguish themselves last year, and at least one of them needs to develop into a reliable target. As of early May, Dallas Goedert was still the main tight end on the team. The Eagles could still release him, since Goedert (42 catches, 11.8 ypr, two TDs) is owed no guaranteed money. Grant Calcaterra (24, 12.4, one) would then be the starter, with no proven options behind him.

The Eagles' offensive line should be a big area of strength — again. Although Mekhi Becton has moved on, the four holdovers are among the best at their po-

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 4 | Dallas | 8:20 |
| Sept. 14 | at Kansas City | 4:25 |
| Sept. 21 | L.A. Rams | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | Denver | 1:00 |
| Oct. 9 | at N.Y. Giants | 8:15 |
| Oct. 19 | at Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Nov. 3 | BYE | |
| Nov. 10 | at Green Bay | 8:15 |
| Nov. 16 | Detroit | 8:20 |
| Nov. 23 | at Dallas | 4:25 |
| Nov. 28 | Chicago | 3:00 |
| Dec. 8 | at L.A. Chargers | 8:15 |
| Dec. 14 | Las Vegas | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Washington | |
| Dec. 28 | at Buffalo | 4:25 |
| TBD | Washington | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| Year | Wins |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 4 |
| 2021 NFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| 2022 SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP | 14 |
| 2023 NFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2024 SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 14 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Nick Sirianni
**Record With Team:** 48-20
**Career Record:** 48-20
**Offensive Coordinator:** Kevin Patullo
**Defensive Coordinator:** Vic Fangio
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Michael Clay
**Running Backs/Assistant Head Coach:** Jemal Singleton
**Wide Receivers:** Aaron Moorehead
**Tight Ends:** Jason Michael
**Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line:** Jeff Stoutland
**Senior Defensive Assistant/Defensive Line:** Clint Hurtt
**Defensive Ends/Outside Linebackers:** Jeremiah Washburn
**Inside Linebackers:** Bobby King
**Cornerbacks:** Roy Anderson
**Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs:** Christian Parker
**Safeties:** Joe Kasper

**SAQUON BARKLEY**
RUNNING BACK

ERIC HARTLINE-IMAGN IMAGES

sitions in the NFL. You won't find a better tackle tandem than Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata, and guard Landon Dickerson was named to his first Pro Bowl last year. So was center Cam Jurgens, who signed a big extension during the offseason. The question comes at Becton's guard spot, where Tyler Steen and Kenyon Green, who was acquired in a trade with the Houston Texans during the offseason, will battle. Steen has been expected to take the job and must now prove he deserves it, while Green will try to match production with potential.

Free-agent pickup Kendall Lamm will provide depth at tackle, and Trevor Keegan (guard) and Brett Toth (guard/tackle) are other options in case of injury.

## DEFENSE

Coordinator Vic Fangio's unit was first in the NFL last year in total defense and second in scoring defense. The Birds suffered some losses from the unit, most notably end Josh Sweat (Arizona Cardinals), tackle Milton Williams (New England Patriots) and C.J. Gardner-Johnson (Texans).

Carter emerged as a standout last year, recording 12 tackles for a loss. He's strong and quick and showed durability. He is already one of the league's best. Jordan Davis should be the other starter, but he has to become more productive to ensure his future with the team. The Eagles drafted Ty Robinson, who led the nation in quarterback hits last year and has plenty of athletic ability, although there is no guarantee he can fill Williams' third tackle role this season.

On the outside, the loss of Sweat and his eight sacks will hurt. Expect Jalyx Hunt and Azeez Ojulari, a free-agent pickup from the Giants who had six sacks last year, to figure strongly in the rotation. Both have potential, although Ojulari needs to stay healthy. Nolan Smith Jr. and Bryce Huff will also see time. Don't be surprised if Roseman adds an outside rusher in the summer.

The Birds made two big moves at linebacker during the offseason, first re-signing All-Pro Zack Baun to a long-term deal and then drafting Jihaad Campbell from Alabama. Though Campbell might see time on the edge, too, he will play inside while Nakobe Dean recovers from a knee injury. Baun is a tackling machine, and Campbell has tremendous potential, provided his shoulder is sound. Jeremiah Trotter Jr. and rookie Smael Mondon Jr. will provide depth.

Last year's draft produced two defensive back starters, both of whom excelled. Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean will be anchors of the secondary again this season. Expect Kelee Ringo and former Giant Adoree' Jackson to fight for the third spot. Reid Blankenship is back at one safety, and second-round pick Andrew Mukuba is likely the other starter. Now healthy, Sydney Brown could be a factor.

## SPECIALISTS

Jake Elliott did not have his usual stellar regular season, making just 28-of-36 field-goal attempts and converting only 1-of-7 tries from 50 yards and beyond. However, in the playoffs, he was 10-of-11. Even though he's under contract for four more seasons, this is a big year for him.

Punter Braden Mann averaged a strong 48.8 yards last year and put 37% of his punts inside the opponent's 20-yard line. He's in the last year of his deal and could get a nice raise.

DeJean is a reliable punt returner who has the ability to break one. With Kenneth Gainwell gone, expect Shipley to handle the bulk of the kickoff returns.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Although the Eagles sustained some key losses on defense and must replace a starting offensive lineman, they are still one of the best teams in the NFL and have a good chance to reach the Super Bowl again. The question is whether rookies like Campbell, Mukuba and Robinson can step in and provide consistent production. Also, will Patullo continue the run-heavy offensive approach that limited turnovers and made life easier for Hurts? If not, the offense could need time to get comfortable.

## 2024 RESULTS (14-3)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 6 | Green Bay | W | 34-29 |
| Sept. | 16 | Atlanta | L | 21-22 |
| Sept. | 22 | at New Orleans | W | 15-12 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Tampa Bay | L | 16-33 |
| Oct. | 13 | Cleveland | W | 20-16 |
| Oct. | 20 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 28-3 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Cincinnati | W | 37-17 |
| Nov. | 3 | Jacksonville | W | 28-23 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Dallas | W | 34-6 |
| Nov. | 14 | Washington | W | 26-18 |
| Nov. | 24 | at L.A. Rams | W | 37-20 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Baltimore | W | 24-19 |
| Dec. | 8 | Carolina | W | 22-16 |
| Dec. | 15 | Pittsburgh | W | 27-13 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Washington | L | 33-36 |
| Dec. | 29 | Dallas | W | 41-7 |
| Jan. | 5 | N.Y. Giants | W | 20-13 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | Green Bay | W | 22-10 |
| Jan. | 19 | L.A. Rams | W | 28-22 |
| Jan. | 26 | Washington | W | 55-23 |
| Feb. | 9 | Kansas City | W | 40-22 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 367.2 | 8 | 7 |
| Rushing | 179.3 | 2 | 1 |
| Passing | 187.9 | 29 | 14 |
| Scoring | 27.2 | 7 | 4 |
| Third Down % | 41.7 | 10 | 6 |
| Points/Play | 0.444 | 5 | 3 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 278.4 | 1 | 1 |
| Rushing | 104.2 | 10 | 5 |
| Passing | 174.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Scoring | 17.8 | 2 | 1 |
| Interceptions | 13 | T12 | T5 |
| Sacks | 41 | T13 | T8 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.303 | 3 | 1 |
| TO Differential | +11 | 6 | 3 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jalen Hurts | 361 | 248 | 2,903 | 18 | 5 |
| Tanner McKee | 45 | 30 | 323 | 4 | 0 |
| Kenny Pickett | 42 | 25 | 291 | 2 | 1 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Saquon Barkley | 345 | 2,005 | 5.8 | 13 |
| Jalen Hurts | 150 | 630 | 4.2 | 14 |
| Kenneth Gainwell | 75 | 290 | 3.9 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DeVonta Smith | 68 | 833 | 12.3 | 8 |
| A.J. Brown | 67 | 1,079 | 16.1 | 7 |
| Dallas Goedert | 42 | 496 | 11.8 | 2 |
| Saquon Barkley | 33 | 278 | 8.4 | 2 |

**KICKING:** Jake Elliott, 28-36 FGs, 47-48 PATs, 131 points
**TACKLES:** Zack Baun, 151; Nakobe Dean, 128
**SACKS:** Josh Sweat, 8.0; Nolan Smith, 6.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** C.J. Gardner-Johnson, 6; Reed Blankenship, 4

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**OTHERWISE OCCUPIED** The Eagles visited the White House on April 28 to celebrate their Super Bowl title, but several members of the team did not make the trip, including quarterback Jalen Hurts, who cited "scheduling conflicts" for his absence.

**CALLING IT A CAREER** Defensive end Brandon Graham, who missed the last several weeks of the regular season with a torn triceps but returned to play in the Super Bowl, retired after the season. Graham spent his entire 15-year career with the Eagles and set a team record with 206 games played. He ended his career with 76.5 career sacks, third in team history, and his strip-sack of Tom Brady in Super Bowl LII is one of the franchise's most significant plays ever.

**CELEBRATION CASUALTY** Although the Eagles' Super Bowl parade did not feature a highlight like Jason Kelce's legendary speech from the Super Bowl LII celebration, it did have plenty of signature moments. One came when general manager **Howie Roseman** was clanked on the forehead by a can of beer thrown by a fan while Roseman was on a double-decker bus heading up the parade route. There was no malice intended by the beer thrower. Fans had been tossing cold ones to people on the buses all day, but Roseman didn't see the offending projectile coming. He sustained a gash below his hairline but took it well and posted "I BLEED FOR THIS CITY," with a photo of him sporting the cut.

**MORE THROWBACKS** Eagles fans could see their heroes wear the popular Kelly green jerseys and helmets four times during the 2025 season, thanks to a rule that the owners passed in late March. Running back Saquon Barkley was in the throwback when he executed his backward leap over a Jacksonville Jaguars player in Week 9 last season.

# SCOUTING THE EAGLES

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PHILADELPHIA

"A convincing argument can be made that Howie Roseman has actually improved the roster since last season, with the exception of the secondary and defensive line. C.J. Gardner-Johnson has a big personality that grated on his teammates and coaches at times, but he can flat-out play. Darius Slay is far from washed, but they made a financial decision on him. … There are good candidates to replace both in Kelee Ringo and Sydney Brown. They're ready. … Re-signing Milton Williams would have cost too much, and the front seven is already loaded. I don't see them having a problem getting after the quarterback or stopping the run. … The reigning champs have built a proven winning formula. Jalen Hurts is the triggerman of a sophisticated offense designed by Nick Sirianni. … It's a top-flight receiving tandem with A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith. … Dallas Goedert is on the trading block, but there hasn't been a taker yet. Hard to see why no one has offered anything good enough for Howie to jump. … There is no better offensive line from left to right than the Eagles, or an offensive line coach superior to Jeff Stoutland. … Jordan Mailata, Landon Dickerson, Cam Jurgens, Tyler Steen and Lane Johnson manhandle opponents. … Saquon Barkley is a special back and represents one of the Giants' and NFL's all-time worst personnel decisions. … The Georgia connection is working out quite well for Philly: Jordan Davis, Jalen Carter and Nolan Smith Jr. … Zack Baun was one of the best bargains in free agency last year. Now, he's the latest player to get rewarded with a new deal."

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 EAGLES VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 Hurts, Jalen | QB | 6-1 | 223 | 5 | Oklahoma | D2-20 | D2-Phi-20 |
| 16 McKee, Tanner | QB | 6-6 | 231 | 2 | Stanford | D6-23 | D6-Phi-23 |
| 14 Thompson-Robinson, D. | QB | 6-2 | 203 | 2 | UCLA | T-Cle-25 | D5a-Cle-23 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 Barkley, Saquon | RB | 6-0 | 232 | 7 | Penn State | FA-NYG-24 | D1-NYG-18 |
| 29 Dillon, AJ | RB | 6-0 | 247 | 5 | Boston College | FA-GB-25 | D2-GB-20 |
| Nichols, Lew | RB | 5-10 | 220 | 1 | Central Michigan | FA-25 | D7-GB-23 |
| 28 Shipley, Will | RB | 5-11 | 209 | 1 | Clemson | D4-24 | D4-Phi-24 |
| 18 Williams, Avery | RB | 5-9 | 200 | 3 | Boise State | FA-Atl-25 | D5c-Atl-21 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 Brown, A.J. | WR | 6-1 | 226 | 6 | Ole Miss | T-Ten-22 | D2-Ten-19 |
| 35 Bryant, Harrison | TE | 6-5 | 240 | 5 | Florida Atlantic | FA-LV-25 | D4-Cle-20 |
| 81 Calcaterra, Grant | TE | 6-4 | 240 | 3 | SMU | D6b-22 | D6b-Phi-22 |
| 86 Cooks, Elijah | WR | 6-4 | 215 | 2 | San José State | FA-25 | FA-Jac-23 |
| 2 Dotson, Jahan | WR | 5-11 | 184 | 3 | Penn State | T-Was-24 | D1-Was-22 |
| 88 Goedert, Dallas | TE | 6-5 | 256 | 7 | South Dakota St. | D2-18 | D2-Phi-18 |
| 83 Granson, Kylen | TE | 6-3 | 242 | 4 | SMU | FA-Ind-25 | D4-Ind-21 |
| 41 Gray, Danny | WR | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | SMU | FA-24 | D3-SF-22 |
| 84 Jenkins, E.J. | TE | 6-6 | 245 | 1 | Georgia Tech | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| 49 Latu, Cameron | TE | 6-5 | 244 | 1 | Alabama | FA-25 | D3c-SF-23 |
| 46 Marshall Jr., Terrace | WR | 6-2 | 200 | 4 | LSU | FA-LV-25 | D2-Car-21 |
| 87 Muse, Nick | TE | 6-5 | 252 | 3 | South Carolina | FA-24 | D7-Min-22 |
| 82 Smith, Ainias | WR | 5-9 | 176 | 1 | Texas A&M | D5a-24 | D5a-Phi-24 |
| 6 Smith, DeVonta | WR | 6-0 | 170 | 4 | Alabama | D1-21 | D1-Phi-21 |
| 89 Wilson, Johnny | WR | 6-6 | 228 | 1 | Florida State | D6a-24 | D6a-Phi-24 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69 Dickerson, Landon | G | 6-6 | 332 | 4 | Alabama | D2-21 | D2-Phi-21 |
| 76 Green, Kenyon | G | 6-4 | 325 | 2 | Texas A&M | T-Hou-25 | D1b-Hou-22 |
| 65 Johnson, Lane | T | 6-6 | 325 | 12 | Oklahoma | D1-13 | D1-Phi-13 |
| 51 Jurgens, Cam | C | 6-3 | 303 | 3 | Nebraska | D2-22 | D2-Phi-22 |
| 77 Keegan, Trevor | G | 6-5 | 306 | 1 | Michigan | D5c-24 | D5c-Phi-24 |
| 72 Kinnard, Darian | T/G | 6-5 | 322 | 2 | Kentucky | FA-24 | D5-KC-22 |
| 74 Lamm, Kendall | T | 6-5 | 308 | 10 | Appalachian State | FA-Mia-25 | FA-Hou-15 |
| 68 Mailata, Jordan | T | 6-8 | 365 | 7 | None | D7-18 | D7-Phi-18 |
| 79 Pryor, Matt | G/T | 6-7 | 332 | 6 | TCU | FA-Chi-25 | D6-Phi-18 |
| 56 Steen, Tyler | G/T | 6-6 | 321 | 2 | Alabama | D3a-23 | D3a-Phi-23 |
| 64 Toth, Brett | OL | 6-6 | 304 | 6 | Army | FA-23 | FA-Phi-19 |
| 67 Vakalahi, Laekin | T | 6-5 | 320 | 1 | None | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 59 Booker IV, Thomas | DT | 6-3 | 301 | 2 | Stanford | FA-23 | D5-Hou-22 |
| 98 Carter, Jalen | DT | 6-3 | 314 | 2 | Georgia | D1a-23 | D1a-Phi-23 |
| 90 Davis, Jordan | DT | 6-6 | 336 | 3 | Georgia | D1-22 | D1-Phi-22 |
| 96 Hall, Gabe | DT | 6-6 | 295 | 1 | Baylor | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |
| 50 Henry, K.J. | DE | 6-4 | 255 | 2 | Clemson | FA-24 | D5-Was-23 |
| 97 Ojomo, Moro | DT | 6-3 | 292 | 2 | Texas | D7-23 | D7-Phi-23 |
| 94 Young, Byron | DT | 6-3 | 292 | 2 | Alabama | W-LV-24 | D3-LV-23 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 53 Baun, Zack | LB | 6-3 | 225 | 5 | Wisconsin | FA-NO-24 | D3a-NO-20 |
| 17 Dean, Nakobe | LB | 5-11 | 231 | 3 | Georgia | D3-22 | D3-Phi-22 |
| 52 Gant, Dallas | LB | 6-2 | 224 | 1 | Toledo | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 0 Huff, Bryce | OLB | 6-3 | 254 | 5 | Memphis | FA-NYJ-24 | FA-NYJ-20 |
| 58 Hunt, Jalyx | OLB | 6-3 | 252 | 1 | Houston Christian | D3-24 | D3-Phi-24 |
| 48 Johnson, Patrick | LB | 6-2 | 248 | 4 | Tulane | FA-NYG-25 | D7-Phi-21 |
| 45 Mathis, Ochaun | OLB | 6-5 | 250 | 2 | Nebraska | FA-24 | D6-LAR-23 |
| 52 Ojulari, Azeez | OLB | 6-3 | 240 | 4 | Georgia | FA-NYG-25 | D2-NYG-21 |
| 3 Smith Jr., Nolan | OLB | 6-2 | 238 | 2 | Georgia | D1b-23 | D1b-Phi-23 |
| 54 Trotter Jr., Jeremiah | LB | 6-0 | 225 | 1 | Clemson | D5b-24 | D5b-Phi-24 |
| 13 Uche, Joshua | OLB | 6-3 | 240 | 5 | Michigan | FA-KC-25 | D2b-NE-20 |
| 57 VanSumeren, Ben | LB | 6-2 | 231 | 2 | Michigan State | FA-23 | FA-Phi-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 Blankenship, Reed | S | 6-1 | 203 | 3 | Middle Tennessee | FA-22 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 21 Brown, Sydney | S | 5-10 | 211 | 2 | Illinois | D3b-23 | D3b-Phi-23 |
| 46 Castro-Fields, Tariq | CB | 6-1 | 197 | 3 | Penn State | FA-24 | D6-SF-22 |
| 38 Cine, Lewis | S | 6-2 | 199 | 3 | Georgia | PS-Buf-24 | D1-Min-22 |
| 33 DeJean, Cooper | DB | 6-0 | 198 | 1 | Iowa | D2-24 | D2-Phi-24 |
| 8 Jackson, Adoree' | CB | 5-11 | 185 | 8 | USC | FA-NYG-25 | D1b-Ten-17 |
| 36 McCollum, Tristin | S | 6-3 | 195 | 1 | Sam Houston | FA-23 | FA-Hou-22 |
| 27 Mitchell, Quinyon | CB | 6-0 | 193 | 1 | Toledo | D1-24 | D1-Phi-24 |
| 30 Nickerson, Parry | CB | 5-10 | 182 | 6 | Tulane | FA-24 | D6-NYJ-18 |
| 23 Ricks, Eli | CB | 6-2 | 188 | 2 | Alabama | FA-23 | FA-Phi-23 |
| 7 Ringo, Kelee | CB | 6-2 | 207 | 2 | Georgia | D4-23 | D4-Phi-23 |
| 31 Sam, Andre | S | 5-10 | 194 | 1 | LSU | FA-24 | FA-Phi-24 |
| 39 Woods, A.J. | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 1 | Pitt | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Elliott, Jake | K | 5-9 | 167 | 8 | Memphis | PS-Cin-17 | D5-Cin-17 |
| 47 Hughlett, Charley | LS | 6-4 | 248 | 10 | UCF | FA-Cle-25 | FA-Dal-12 |
| 10 Mann, Braden | P | 5-11 | 198 | 5 | Texas A&M | FA-23 | D6-NYJ-20 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 6 | DeVonta Smith | 82 | Ainias Smith |
| WR | 11 | A.J. Brown | 89 | Johnny Wilson |
| WR | 2 | Jahan Dotson | 46 | Terrace Marshall Jr. |
| LT | 68 | Jordan Mailata | 78 | Myles Hinton (R) |
| LG | 69 | Landon Dickerson | 77 | Trevor Keegan |
| C | 51 | Cam Jurgens | 66 | Drew Kendall (R) |
| RG | 56 | Tyler Steen | 76 | Kenyon Green |
| RT | 65 | Lane Johnson | 74 | Kendall Lamm |
| TE | 88 | Dallas Goedert | 81 | Grant Calcaterra |
| QB | 1 | Jalen Hurts | 16 | Tanner McKee |
| RB | 26 | Saquon Barkley | 29 | A.J. Dillon |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 97 | Moro Ojomo | 94 | Byron Young |
| NT | 90 | Jordan Davis | 59 | Thomas Booker IV |
| DT | 98 | Jalen Carter | 95 | Ty Robinson (R) |
| OLB | 3 | Nolan Smith Jr. | 0 | Bryce Huff |
| ILB | 53 | Zack Baun | 54 | Jeremiah Trotter Jr. |
| ILB | 30 | Jihaad Campbell (R) | 42 | Smael Mondon Jr. (R) |
| OLB | 58 | Jalyx Hunt | 52 | Azeez Ojulari |
| CB | 7 | Kelee Ringo | 8 | Adoree' Jackson |
| CB | 27 | Quinyon Mitchell | 23 | Eli Ricks |
| SS | 24 | Andrew Mukuba (R) | 36 | Tristin McCollum |
| FS | 32 | Reed Blankenship | 21 | Sydney Brown |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | 10 | Braden Mann | KR | 28 | Will Shipley |
| K | 4 | Jake Elliott | PR | 33 | Cooper DeJean |

**6.6%**

Jalen Hurts' completion percentage over expected of plus-6.6% led the league, per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## EAGLES IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jihaad Campbell | LB | 6-3 | 235 | Alabama |
| 2 | Andrew Mukuba | S | 5-11 | 186 | Texas |
| 4 | Ty Robinson | DT | 6-5 | 288 | Nebraska |
| 5 | Mac McWilliams | CB | 5-10 | 191 | UCF |
| 5 | Smael Mondon Jr. | LB | 6-2 | 224 | Georgia |
| 5 | Drew Kendall | C | 6-4 | 308 | Boston College |
| 6 | Kyle McCord | QB | 6-3 | 218 | Syracuse |
| 6 | Myles Hinton | OT | 6-6 | 323 | Michigan |
| 6 | Cameron Williams | OT | 6-5 | 317 | Texas |
| 6 | Antwaun Powell-Ryland Jr. | Edge | 6-2 | 258 | Virginia Tech |

This was a meat-and-potatoes draft for the Eagles, and it addressed needs, rather than featuring big names. Jihaad Campbell was considered by many a top-15 pick until he hurt his shoulder. If healthy, he could play inside or on the edge. Expect Andrew Mukuba to start at safety; he has a smaller frame than the average player at his position, but he is strong in coverage. Ty Robinson is an athletic interior player who will see time right away, while Mac McWilliams will provide needed depth at corner. Smael Mondon Jr. should be a special-teams contributor immediately. Drew Kendall should provide interior O-line depth. Kyle McCord will likely start out as the third quarterback, but he could be a serviceable backup down the line.

# COMMANDERS

NFC EAST FORECAST
2

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Sept. 11 | at Green Bay | 8:15 |
| Sept. 21 | Las Vegas | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at L.A. Chargers | 4:25 |
| Oct. 13 | Chicago | 8:15 |
| Oct. 19 | at Dallas | 4:25 |
| Oct. 27 | at Kansas City | 8:15 |
| Nov. 2 | Seattle | 8:20 |
| Nov. 9 | Detroit | 4:25 |
| Nov. 16 | Miami (Madrid) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Nov. 23 | BYE | |
| Nov. 30 | Denver | 8:20 |
| Dec. 7 | at Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| TBD | Philadelphia | |
| Dec. 25 | Dallas | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Philadelphia | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| **2020** NFC PLAYOFFS | 7 |
| **2021** | 7 |
| **2022** | 8 |
| **2023** | 4 |
| **2024** NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 12 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Dan Quinn
**Record With Team:** 12-5
**Career Record:** 55-47
**Offensive Coordinator:** Kliff Kingsbury
**Defensive Coordinator:** Joe Whitt Jr.
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Larry Izzo
**Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Brian Johnson
**Quarterbacks:** Tavita Pritchard
**Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs:** Anthony Lynn
**Wide Receivers:** Bobby Engram
**Tight Ends:** David Raih
**Offensive Line:** Bobby Johnson
**Defensive Line:** Darryl Tapp
**Linebackers:** Ken Norton Jr.
**Defensive Backs:** Tommy Donatell
**Defensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Jason Simmons

For the first time in recent memory, the Commanders enjoyed a calm, normal, tumult-free offseason — no seismic changes at owner, head coach, general manager, quarterback or even nickname. Last year's 12-5 juggernaut and run to the NFC Championship Game in Jayden Daniels' rookie season gave the franchise a renewed sense of direction and purpose: to build a sustainable championship contender around its young, dynamic quarterback. To that end, the Commanders signed almost two dozen free agents, beefed up along both lines, drafted smartly and purposefully and imported offensive skill players to give Daniels more weapons. He now has a new left tackle (five-time Pro Bowler Laremy Tunsil, via trade) and a new playmaking wideout (Deebo Samuel, also via trade). There are still some concerns (most notably a dearth of proven edge rushers), but this is a roster that should contend with Philadelphia for the NFC East crown.

## OFFENSE

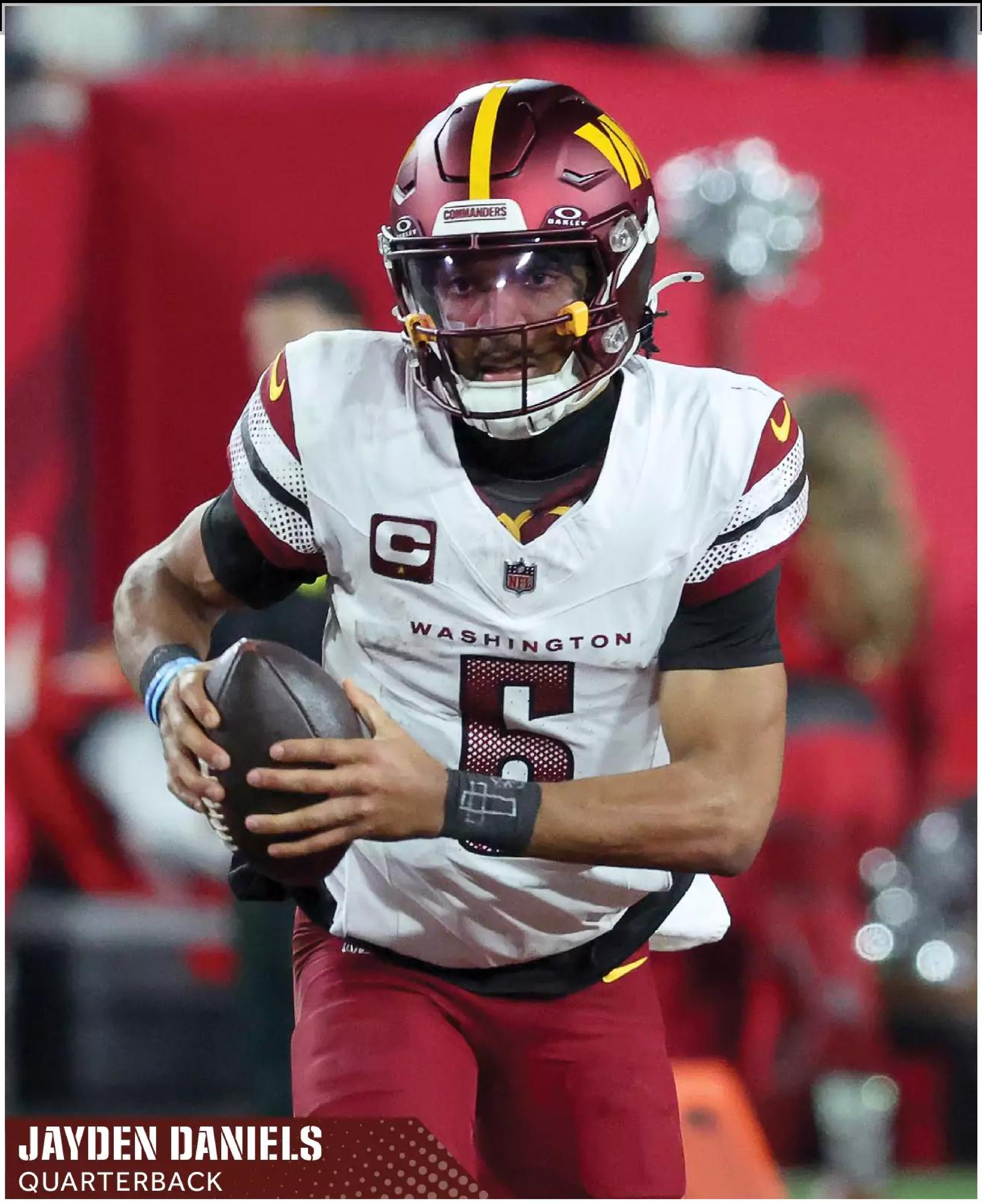
If Year 1 of the Daniels era was about acclimating Washington's franchise quarterback to the NFL — a successful mission by any measure, culminating in his winning Offensive Rookie of the Year honors — Year 2 is about building a championship-level infrastructure around him. That process began with an overhaul of the offensive line. By adding Tunsil via free agency and Oregon standout Josh Conerly Jr. via the first round of the draft, the Commanders landed not one, but two talented left tackles. Obviously, one will need to play elsewhere, and logic dictated it would be the veteran Tunsil at left tackle and Conerly at right, though another option would be to shift Conerly to one of the guard spots and keep Brandon Coleman at right tackle. In any case, these are good problems to have.

The trade with San Francisco for Samuel (which cost the Commanders a 2025 fifth-round pick) gives Daniels another savvy, prolific playmaker at receiver to pair with favorite target Terry McLaurin. Samuel should make the offense more explosive, with his elite yards-after-catch ability, and he should mainly line up in the slot, where he can be a threat on jet sweeps and screens. Veteran Noah Brown — best known in D.C. for catching Daniels' Hail Mary to beat Chicago in Week 8 last season — is opposite McLaurin, with solid depth from Michael Gallup, Luke McCaffrey, K.J. Osborn and 2025 fourth-rounder Jaylin Lane.

The Commanders brought back both of their primary tight ends from 2024 in Zach Ertz and John Bates — the former a veteran who revived his career with 66 catches (including seven touchdowns) last season, the latter an elite blocking specialist whose value goes beyond the stat sheet. They also have an intriguing third-stringer in 2024 second-rounder Ben Stinnott, who frequently lined up as a fullback and is expected to take a step forward in 2025.

Likewise, Washington is bringing back its running back duo of Brian Robinson Jr. and Austin Ekeler. At 30, however, Ekeler, a third-down specialist whose 2024 numbers (77 carries, 35 receptions) were below his career norms, is old for an NFL running back. With that in mind, the Commanders have built some depth behind him, with Jeremy McNichols coming off a productive 2024 and seventh-rounder Jacory Croskey-Merritt now in the mix.

The Commanders' offense was already elite in 2024 — ranking fifth in scoring, seventh in yards, third in rushing yards, sixth in third-down conversion rate and first in fourth-down conversion rate — and appears to have gotten considerably better heading into this season.



**JAYDEN DANIELS**
QUARTERBACK

KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

Cutting two-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle Jonathan Allen felt like a drastic move at the time, but perhaps drastic action was necessary to bolster a run defense that ranked 30th in the NFL last season. The Commanders added seven defensive linemen in free agency — ends Deatrich Wise Jr., Clelin Ferrell, Jacob Martin and Jalyn Holms and tackles Javon Kinlaw, Eddie Goldman and Sheldon Day. Kinlaw, who played all 34 regular season games the past two years with the 49ers and Jets and is just entering his prime at 27, joins a tackle rotation that already includes Pro Bowler Daron Payne and 2024 second-rounder Jer'Zhan Newton, the latter of whom showed vast improvement as last season wore on. Holdover Dorance Armstrong is likely to hold down one of the starting end slots. Instead of elite talent, the Commanders are banking on the depth, versatility and dependability of this unit.

With the signings of cornerback Jonathan Jones and safety/corner Will Harris, a trade for four-time Pro Bowl corner Marshon Lattimore and the selection of Ole Miss corner Trey Amos in the second round of the draft, the secondary boasts admirable depth and versatility. Corner Mike Sainristil, a 2024 second-rounder, was a revelation last season, starting 19 games (including playoffs) and establishing himself as a standout slot corner, until injuries elsewhere forced the team to move him to the outside. The coaching staff has hinted that they prefer Jones in the slot, which would put Sainristil at an outside post opposite Lattimore. But Harris, too, is comfortable moving between safety and corner, and Amos, at 6-foot-1, has a size advantage over Jones and Sainristil (both 5-10), which makes him an intriguing option on the outside. This could be a unit where titles and roles barely matter.

Ten-time Pro Bowl linebacker Bobby Wagner may not be what he once was, but his leadership, durability (he played 99% of the team's defensive snaps in 2024) and run-stopping were the primary reasons the Commanders brought him back at 35. Last season was his 13th consecutive campaign with at least 100 tackles. Wagner will once again pair with veteran Frankie Luvu to anchor the linebacker unit. Jordan Magee, a 2024 fifth-rounder, is a candidate for a leap forward following an injury-plagued rookie season. The Commanders were also excited about 2025 sixth-rounder Kain Madrano out of UCLA, who posted the fastest 40-yard dash time of any linebacker at the NFL Scouting Combine (4.46). A converted wide receiver, he will play mostly on special teams, but his speed and athleticism could allow him to become an option in dime packages.

## SPECIALISTS

Punter Tress Way is the ultimate security blanket, a two-time Pro Bowler who has averaged 46.9 yards per punt in his 11 seasons in Washington. After cycling through no fewer than four kickers in 2024, the team tried to buy some stability there with a $4.35 million gamble — the most guaranteed money ever for a kicker on a one-year deal — on Matt Gay, who carries a career field-goal percentage of 85.5%. Special teams standouts Nick Bellore and Jeremy Reaves, both former Pro Bowlers, return to anchor this unit in 2025. Fourth-round pick Jaylin Lane, a receiver by trade, may make his biggest immediate impact in 2025 as the kickoff and punt returner.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Commanders did almost all of what they set out to do over the offseason — giving their franchise quarterback additional weapons and additional protection while shoring up the defense. They moved swiftly and decisively to address their needs while building depth and maintaining financial flexibility. The lack of a game-changing edge rusher is the only thing keeping this from being an overwhelmingly successful offseason, but everything is in place for the Commanders to challenge the Eagles for the NFC East crown and build on last year's success.

## 2024 RESULTS (12-5)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Tampa Bay | L | 20-37 |
| Sept. | 15 | N.Y. Giants | W | 21-18 |
| Sept. | 23 | at Cincinnati | W | 38-33 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Arizona | W | 42-14 |
| Oct. | 6 | Cleveland | W | 34-13 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Baltimore | L | 23-30 |
| Oct. | 20 | Carolina | W | 40-7 |
| Oct. | 27 | Chicago | W | 18-15 |
| Nov. | 3 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 27-22 |
| Nov. | 10 | Pittsburgh | L | 27-28 |
| Nov. | 14 | at Philadelphia | L | 8-26 |
| Nov. | 24 | Dallas | L | 26-34 |
| Dec. | 1 | Tennessee | W | 42-19 |
| Dec. | 15 | at New Orleans | W | 20-19 |
| Dec. | 22 | Philadelphia | W | 36-33 |
| Dec. | 29 | Atlanta (ot) | W | 30-24 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Dallas | W | 23-19 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | at Tampa Bay | W | 23-20 |
| Jan. | 18 | at Detroit | W | 45-31 |
| Jan. | 26 | at Philadelphia | L | 23-55 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 369.6 | 6 | 6 |
| Rushing | 154.1 | 3 | 2 |
| Passing | 215.6 | 17 | 10 |
| Scoring | 28.5 | 5 | 3 |
| Third Down % | 45.6 | 6 | 3 |
| Points/Play | 0.436 | 7 | 4 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 326.9 | 13 | 4 |
| Rushing | 137.5 | 30 | 14 |
| Passing | 189.5 | 3 | 2 |
| Scoring | 23.0 | 18 | 10 |
| Interceptions | 7 | T26 | T14 |
| Sacks | 43 | T11 | 7 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.412 | 26 | 13 |
| TO Differential | +1 | 15 | 7 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jayden Daniels | 480 | 331 | 3,568 | 25 | 9 |
| Marcus Mariota | 44 | 34 | 364 | 4 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jayden Daniels | 148 | 891 | 6.0 | 6 |
| Brian Robinson Jr. | 187 | 799 | 4.3 | 8 |
| Austin Ekeler | 77 | 367 | 4.8 | 4 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Terry McLaurin | 82 | 1,096 | 13.4 | 13 |
| Zach Ertz | 66 | 654 | 9.9 | 7 |
| Olamide Zaccheaus | 45 | 506 | 11.2 | 3 |
| Austin Ekeler | 35 | 366 | 10.5 | 0 |
| Noah Brown | 35 | 453 | 12.9 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Austin Seibert, 27-30 FGs, 22-24 PATs, 103 points
**TACKLES:** Bobby Wagner, 132; Jeremy Chinn, 117
**SACKS:** Dante Fowler, 10.5; Frankie Luvu, 8.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Mike Sainristil, 2; 5 players tied with 1

## OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**PAY THE MAN** Over the spring, the Commanders initiated contract extension talks with star receiver **Terry McLaurin**, hoping to keep one of the most prolific wideouts in the game in the fold. McLaurin's present deal, with a $22.8 million average salary that ranked 16th in the NFL among receivers, was set to expire at the end of this season. McLaurin, 30, has amassed at least 1,000 receiving yards in five straight seasons, and in 2024 he set a franchise single-season record with 13 touchdown catches.

**BACK IN ACTION** New Commanders receiver Michael Gallup came out of retirement for the chance to catch passes from Jayden Daniels. Gallup, 29, was one of Dak Prescott's favorite targets over his six seasons in Dallas but retired in the summer of 2024, not long after signing with the Las Vegas Raiders, and sat out the entire 2024 season.

**STAFF ADDITION** In April, the Commanders hired five-time Pro Bowl receiver Wes Welker as a personnel analyst, a hybrid position in which he will report to both the coaching and player-personnel staffs. Welker was teammates with Commanders offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury at Texas Tech and also coached with Commanders GM Adam Peters while with the San Francisco 49ers.

**HEADING HOME** The Commanders were close to finalizing a $3.7 billion deal with city officials in Washington, D.C., to return the team to the site of RFK Stadium on the eastern edge of the city, with a new, domed stadium and a 174-acre complex of housing, hotels, offices and retail. The franchise played at RFK from 1961-96 before moving to suburban Landover, Maryland.

**JACK OF ALL TRADES** Expect the Commanders to move newly signed defensive back Will Harris all over the field this season, as versatility is among his top assets. Last season in New Orleans, he saw most of his action at free safety, but he also got snaps at slot cornerback, strong safety and even linebacker.

## SCOUTING THE COMMANDERS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP WASHINGTON

"What an epic season for Jayden Daniels. He's got it all: the arm, mind and legs. His present and future are ultra-bright. Don't see anything but a high ceiling ahead of him. Nothing was too big for him as a rookie. Hard to see him regressing. … The trade for five-time Pro Bowl left tackle Laremy Tunsil gives Daniels an elite blindside protector. General manager Adam Peters is aggressive. His background with Texans GM Nick Caserio helped close that deal. They worked together in New England and are former roommates. … I like the trade for Deebo Samuel. He's going to be supremely motivated to get back in shape and get healthy. … Terry McLaurin has mastered the route tree. … I don't see Josh Conerly Jr. sitting on the bench very long. He'll find a home at right tackle or guard soon enough. … Zach Ertz has the experience and hands that teams rarely find at tight end. … Brian Robinson Jr. and Austin Ekeler give the Commanders a running tandem that works. … Frankie Luvu is a gritty dude. … I like the left side of the defensive line (Dorance Armstrong and Daron Payne) more than Javon Kinlaw and Deatrich Wise Jr. … Bobby Wagner is a heady middle linebacker who keeps finding the ball and making sure tackles. … The secondary isn't filled with big names, but they play well together. … Matt Gay is the new kicker and has something to prove. … Trey Amos should be a fast contributor at corner, especially if Marshon Lattimore has health issues again. … There isn't much depth at linebacker or safety to speak of."

MITCH STRINGER-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 COMMANDERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 Daniels, Jayden | QB | 6-4 | 210 | 1 | LSU | D1-24 | D1-Was-24 |
| 15 Hartman, Sam | QB | 6-1 | 209 | 1 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |
| 14 Johnson, Josh | QB | 6-3 | 214 | 10 | San Diego | FA-Bal-25 | D5-TB-08 |
| 18 Mariota, Marcus | QB | 6-4 | 222 | 10 | Oregon | FA-Phi-24 | D1-Ten-15 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 Allen, Kazmeir | RB | 5-8 | 176 | 2 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Was-23 |
| 30 Ekeler, Austin | RB | 5-10 | 200 | 8 | Western State | FA-LAC-24 | FA-LAC-17 |
| 26 McNichols, Jeremy | RB | 5-9 | 205 | 8 | Boise State | FA-24 | D5-TB-17 |
| 8 Robinson Jr., Brian | RB | 6-1 | 225 | 3 | Alabama | D3-22 | D3-Was-22 |
| 36 Rodriguez Jr., Chris | RB | 5-11 | 224 | 2 | Kentucky | D6-23 | D6-Was-23 |
| 34 Wiley, Michael | RB | 6-0 | 215 | 1 | Arizona | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 87 Bates, John | TE | 6-6 | 256 | 4 | Boise State | D4-21 | D4-Was-21 |
| 85 Brown, Noah | WR | 6-2 | 225 | 9 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D7-Dal-17 |
| 86 Ertz, Zach | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 11 | Stanford | FA-24 | D2-Phi-13 |
| 12 Gallup, Michael | WR | 6-1 | 205 | 6 | Colorado State | FA-25 | D3-Dal-18 |
| 83 Jackson, Tyree | TE | 6-7 | 249 | 5 | Buffalo | FA-24 | FA-Buf-19 |
| 12 McCaffrey, Luke | WR | 6-2 | 195 | 1 | Rice | D3b-24 | D3b-Was-24 |
| 17 McLaurin, Terry | WR | 6-0 | 210 | 6 | Ohio State | D3-19 | D3-Was-19 |
| 19 Moore, Chris | WR | 6-1 | 200 | 9 | Cincinnati | FA-24 | D4-Bal-16 |
| 13 Osborn, K.J. | WR | 6-0 | 200 | 5 | Miami (Fla.) | W-NE-24 | D5b-Min-20 |
| 1 Samuel Sr., Deebo | WR | 6-0 | 215 | 6 | South Carolina | T-SF-25 | D2-SF-19 |
| 82 Sinnott, Ben | TE | 6-4 | 245 | 1 | Kansas State | D2c-24 | D2c-Was-24 |
| 88 Turner, Cole | TE | 6-6 | 240 | 3 | Nevada | D5b-22 | D5b-Was-22 |
| 41 Yankoff, Colson | TE | 6-4 | 225 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 67 Allegretti, Nick | G | 6-4 | 310 | 6 | Illinois | FA-KC-24 | D7-KC-19 |
| 63 Biadasz, Tyler | C | 6-3 | 316 | 5 | Wisconsin | FA-Dal-24 | D4b-Dal-20 |
| 74 Coleman, Brandon | T | 6-6 | 320 | 1 | TCU | D3a-24 | D3a-Was-24 |
| 76 Cosmi, Sam | T/G | 6-7 | 309 | 4 | Texas | D2-21 | D2-Was-21 |
| 60 Deiter, Michael | C | 6-6 | 315 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-Hou-24 | D3-Mia-19 |
| 61 Good-Jones, Julian | G | 6-5 | 313 | 3 | Iowa State | PS-Phi-23 | FA-Phi-20 |
| 51 Hart, Bobby | T | 6-5 | 310 | 9 | Florida State | FA-24 | D7-NYG-15 |
| 53 Herbig, Nate | G | 6-4 | 334 | 6 | Stanford | FA-Pit-25 | FA-Phi-19 |
| 75 Paul, Chris | G | 6-4 | 324 | 3 | Tulsa | D7a-22 | D7a-Was-22 |
| Phillips, Tyre | T | 6-5 | 325 | 5 | Mississippi State | FA-NYG-25 | D3d-Bal-20 |
| 79 Sarell, Foster | T | 6-6 | 322 | 3 | Stanford | FA-LAC-25 | FA-Bal-21 |
| 73 Scott, Trent | T | 6-5 | 320 | 7 | Grambling State | FA-Pit-23 | FA-LAC-18 |
| 78 Tunsil, Laremy | T | 6-5 | 313 | 9 | Ole Miss | T-Hou-25 | D1-Mia-16 |
| 71 Wylie, Andrew | G/T | 6-5 | 304 | 7 | Eastern Michigan | FA-KC-23 | FA-Ind-17 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 92 Armstrong, Dorance | DE | 6-4 | 255 | 7 | Kansas | FA-Dal-24 | D4a-Dal-18 |
| 64 Day, Sheldon | DT | 6-1 | 294 | 9 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | D4-Jac-16 |
| 72 Fehoko Jr., Viliami | DT | 6-4 | 267 | 1 | San José State | FA-24 | D4-Dal-23 |
| 99 Ferrell, Clelin | DE | 6-4 | 265 | 6 | Clemson | FA-SF-24 | D1a-LV-19 |
| 97 Goldman, Eddie | DT | 6-3 | 320 | 7 | Florida State | FA-Atl-25 | D2-Chi-15 |
| 96 Holmes, Jalyn | DE | 6-5 | 283 | 7 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D4-Min-18 |
| 90 Jean-Baptiste, Jav. | DE | 6-4 | 260 | 1 | Notre Dame | D7-24 | D7-Was-24 |
| 50 Jones Jr., Andre | DE | 6-5 | 258 | 2 | Louisiana | D7-23 | D7-Was-23 |
| 52 Kinlaw, Javon | DT | 6-5 | 319 | 4 | South Carolina | FA-NYJ-25 | D1a-SF-20 |
| Maguranyanga, T.J. | DE | 6-4 | 222 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-Was-25 |
| 55 Martin, Jacob | DE | 6-2 | 242 | 7 | Temple | FA-Chi-25 | D6-Sea-18 |
| 68 Ndubuisi, Haggai | DT | 6-6 | 298 | 4 | None | FA-24 | FA-Ari-22 |
| 95 Newton, Jer'Zhan | DT | 6-2 | 295 | 1 | Illinois | D2a-24 | D2a-Was-24 |
| 94 Payne, Daron | DT | 6-3 | 320 | 7 | Alabama | D1-18 | D1-Was-18 |
| 96 Pollard, Norell | DE | 6-0 | 288 | 1 | Virginia Tech | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |
| 91 Wise Jr., Deatrich | DL | 6-5 | 280 | 8 | Arkansas | FA-NE-25 | D4-NE-17 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 57 Bellore, Nick | LB | 6-1 | 250 | 14 | Central Michigan | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-11 |
| 45 Hampton, Dominique | LB | 6-3 | 220 | 1 | Washington | D5b-24 | D5b-Was-24 |
| 4 Luvu, Frankie | LB | 6-3 | 235 | 7 | Washington State | FA-Car-24 | FA-NYJ-18 |
| 58 Magee, Jordan | LB | 6-3 | 225 | 1 | Temple | D5a-24 | D5a-Was-24 |
| 54 Wagner, Bobby | LB | 6-0 | 242 | 13 | Utah State | FA-Sea-24 | D2-Sea-12 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 Butler, Percy | S | 6-0 | 190 | 3 | Louisiana | D4-22 | D4-Was-22 |
| 22 Forrest, Darrick | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | Cincinnati | D5-21 | D5-Was-21 |
| 3 Harris, Will | S | 6-1 | 206 | 6 | Boston College | FA-NO-25 | D3-Det-19 |
| 1 Igbinoghene, Noah | CB | 5-11 | 197 | 5 | Auburn | FA-Dal-24 | D1c-Mia-20 |
| 31 Jones, Jonathan | CB | 5-9 | 185 | 9 | Auburn | FA-NE-25 | FA-NE-16 |
| 2 Lattimore, Marshon | CB | 6-0 | 192 | 8 | Ohio State | T-NO-24 | D1a-NO-17 |
| 20 Martin, Quan | S | 6-0 | 195 | 2 | Illinois | D2-23 | D2-Was-23 |
| 48 Nikkel, Ben | S | 6-1 | 210 | 1 | Iowa State | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |
| 40 Owens, Tyler | S | 6-2 | 213 | 1 | Texas Tech | FA-24 | FA-Was-24 |
| 37 Price, Bobby | CB | 6-3 | 208 | 5 | Norfolk State | FA-24 | FA-Det-20 |
| 39 Reaves, Jeremy | S | 5-11 | 200 | 7 | South Alabama | FA-18 | FA-Phi-18 |
| 0 Sainristil, Mike | CB | 5-10 | 182 | 1 | Michigan | D2b-24 | D2b-Was-24 |
| 38 Seymour, Kevon | CB | 6-0 | 188 | 9 | USC | FA-24 | D6-Buf-16 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 Gay, Matt | K | 6-0 | 232 | 6 | Utah | FA-Ind-25 | D5-TB-19 |
| 69 Ott, Tyler | LS | 6-3 | 252 | 10 | Harvard | FA-Bal-24 | FA-NE-14 |
| 10 Way, Tress | P | 6-1 | 220 | 11 | Oklahoma | W-Chi-14 | FA-Chi-13 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 17 | Terry McLaurin | 13 | K.J. Osborn |
| WR | 1 | Deebo Samuel | 83 | Jaylin Lane (R) |
| WR | 85 | Noah Brown | 11 | Luke McCaffrey |
| LT | 78 | Laremy Tunsil | 72 | Josh Conerly Jr. (R) |
| LG | 67 | Nick Allegretti | 75 | Chris Paul |
| C | 63 | Tyler Biadasz | 60 | Michael Deiter |
| RG | 76 | Sam Cosmi | 73 | Trent Scott |
| RT | 74 | Brandon Coleman | 71 | Andrew Wylie |
| TE | 86 | Zach Ertz | 87 | John Bates |
| QB | 5 | Jayden Daniels | 18 | Marcus Mariota |
| RB | 8 | Brian Robinson Jr. | 30 | Austin Ekeler |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 92 | Dorance Armstrong | 55 | Jacob Martin |
| DT | 94 | Daron Payne | 97 | Eddie Goldman |
| DT | 52 | Javon Kinlaw | 95 | Jer'Zhan Newton |
| DE | 99 | Clelin Ferrell | 91 | Deatrich Wise Jr. |
| MLB | 54 | Bobby Wagner | 58 | Jordan Magee |
| WLB | 4 | Frankie Luvu | 57 | Nick Bellore |
| CB | 31 | Jonathan Jones | 23 | Trey Amos (R) |
| CB | 0 | Mike Sainristil | 38 | Kevon Seymour |
| NB | 2 | Marshon Lattimore | 23 | Trey Amos (R) |
| SS | 3 | Will Harris | 35 | Percy Butler |
| FS | 20 | Quan Martin | 39 | Jeremy Reaves |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 16 | Matt Gay | KR | 83 | Jaylin Lane (R) |
| P | 10 | Tress Way | PR | 83 | Jaylin Lane (R) |

**87%**

The Commanders converted 20 of their 23 fourth-down attempts, a league-high 87% rate that was ahead of the second-place Bills by nearly 15 percentage points.

## COMMANDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Josh Conerly Jr. | OT | 6-4 | 315 | Oregon |
| 2 | Trey Amos | CB | 6-1 | 190 | Ole Miss |
| 4 | Jaylin Lane | WR | 5-10 | 196 | Virginia Tech |
| 6 | Kain Medrano | LB | 6-3 | 230 | UCLA |
| 7 | Jacory Croskey-Merritt | RB | 5-11 | 208 | Arizona |

The Commanders held only five picks in the 2025 draft, having sacrificed much of their draft capital via trades and to sign free agents. But rather than trade back to amass more picks, the team stuck to its draft board, prioritizing low-risk, Week 1-ready talent over high ceilings and positional needs (such as edge rushers). Unsurprisingly, two of the team's three top picks were selected with quarterback Jayden Daniels in mind — with the athletic Josh Conerly Jr. a potential starter at right tackle and Jaylin Lane, a deep-threat slot receiver, an intriguing option not only for Daniels' passes, but also for jet sweeps and screens, plus punt and kick returns.

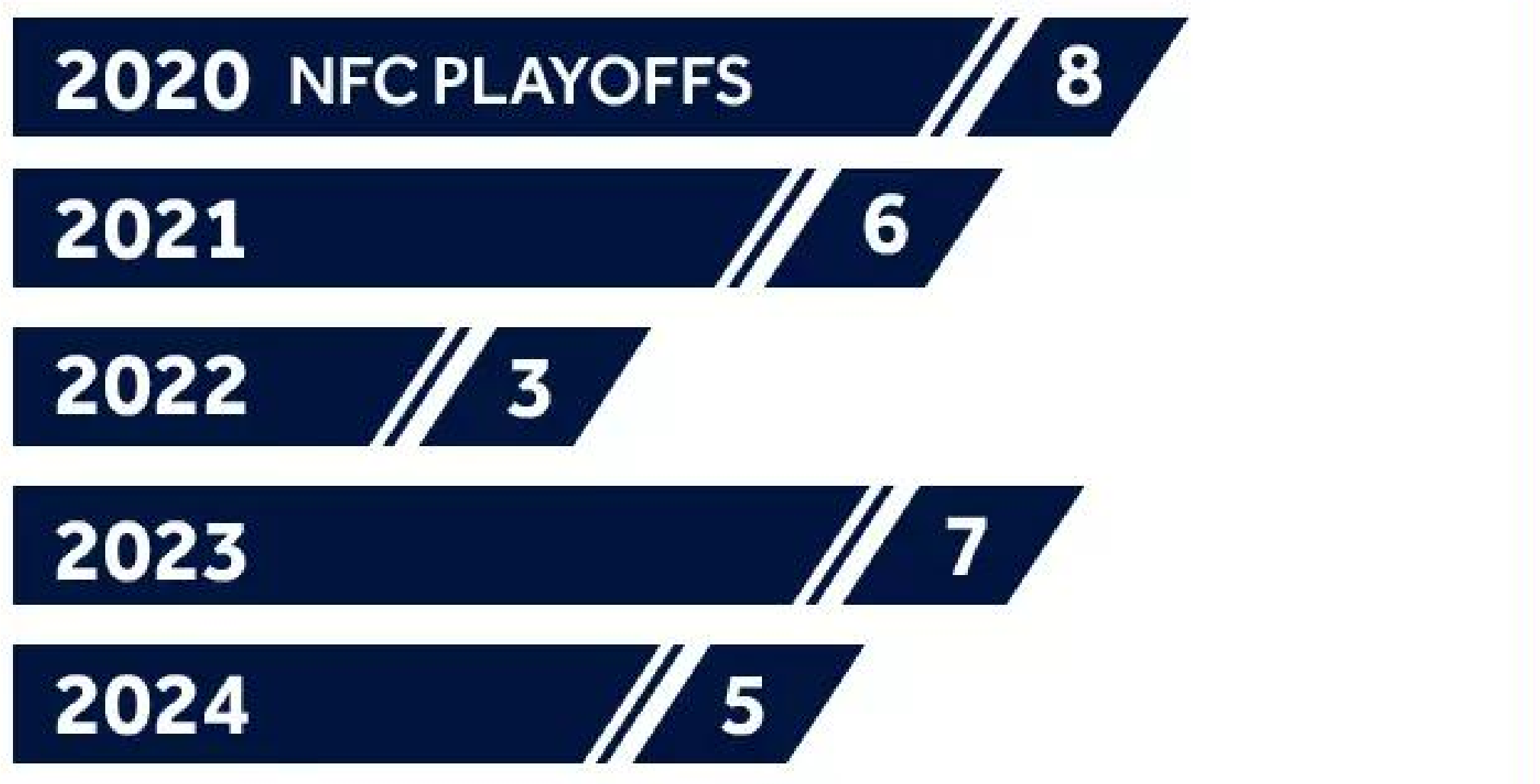
# CHI BEARS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 8 | Minnesota | 8:15 |
| Sept. 14 | at Detroit | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Dallas | 4:25 |
| Sept. 28 | at Las Vegas | 4:25 |
| Oct. 5 | BYE | |
| Oct. 13 | at Washington | 8:15 |
| Oct. 19 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | at Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | at Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Nov. 28 | at Philadelphia | 3:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| TBD | Green Bay | |
| Dec. 28 | at San Francisco | 8:20 |
| TBD | Detroit | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Ben Johnson
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** First season
**Offensive Coordinator:** Declan Doyle
**Defensive Coordinator:** Dennis Allen
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Richard Hightower
**Quarterbacks:** J.T. Barrett
**Running Backs:** Eric Bieniemy
**Wide Receivers/Assistant Head Coach:** Antwaan Randle El
**Tight Ends:** Jim Dray
**Offensive Line:** Dan Roushar
**Pass Game Coordinator:** Press Taylor
**Defensive Line:** Jeremy Garrett
**Linebackers:** Richard Smith
**Defensive Backs/Passing Game Coordinator:** Al Harris
**Defensive Assistant/Nickels:** Cannon Matthews

NFC NORTH FORECAST

4

The Bears aggressively pursued head-coaching candidate Ben Johnson, hiring the wunderkind Lions offensive coordinator one day after Detroit lost to the Washington Commanders in the NFC divisional playoffs.

The hope is that the 39-year-old can replicate the success he had in the Motor City with a Lions team that led the NFL in scoring at 28.2 points per game during his three seasons as coordinator. In Chicago, Johnson will be entrusted with developing second-year pro Caleb Williams into the type of quarterback the Bears envisioned when they selected the 2022 Heisman Trophy winner with the No. 1 overall pick in the 2024 draft out of USC. Starting all 17 games as a rookie last year, Williams showed promise but had an up-and-down debut.

Johnson aims to establish a culture of accountability and integrity with the Bears. After taking the job, he delivered a message to players to "get comfortable being uncomfortable." Said Johnson: "The bar has been set higher than it's ever been set before. The only way for this team and for you as individual players to reach your potential is to be pushed and to be challenged, and that's exactly what [I] and my staff plan on doing."

## OFFENSE

The Bears' primary objective during the offseason was to put Williams in the best position to succeed. Not only did they hire Johnson, who will call plays, but they also completely overhauled their interior offensive line after allowing a league-high 68 sacks in 2024. General manager Ryan Poles traded for Pro Bowl guards Joe Thuney and Jonah Jackson from the Kansas City Chiefs and Los Angeles Rams, respectively, and signed top free-agent center Drew Dalman.

The Bears continued to address their offense in the draft, spending their first three picks on Michigan tight end Colston Loveland (No. 10) in the first round and Missouri wide receiver Luther Burden III (No. 39) and Boston College tackle Ozzy Trapilo (No. 56) in the second round.

Burden will join veteran DJ Moore and second-year pro Rome Odunze to form what should be a formidable receiving trio. Across two seasons with the Bears, Moore has caught 194 passes for 2,330 yards and 14 touchdowns — ranking sixth, eighth and tied for 12th in the NFL in those respective categories. Last season, the seven-year veteran led the Bears with a career-high 98 receptions for 966 yards and six touchdowns. Drafted ninth overall lasat year, Odunze caught 54 passes for 734 yards and three TDs in 2024, joining Hall of Fame tight end Mike Ditka as the only Bears rookies with at least 50 receptions and 700 yards.

The receivers will be coached by Antwaan Randle El, a Super Bowl-winning player with the Pittsburgh Steelers and a Chicago-area native who excelled while working with Johnson as Lions receiver coach.

Loveland will pair with sixth-year pro Cole Kmet at tight end. The 2020 second-round pick from Notre Dame ranks second among tight ends in Bears history with 258 receptions behind Ditka (316) and third in TD catches (19) behind Ditka (34) and Greg Olsen (20). Johnson frequently employed two-tight end formations with great success in Detroit.

The most intriguing position battle will be at left tackle, where incumbent Braxton Jones is recovering from ankle surgery. Trapilo and 2024 third-round pick Kiran Amegadjie could compete for the spot, and moving right tackle Darnell Wright to the left side is a possibility as well.

**CALEB WILLIAMS**
QUARTERBACK

CARY EDMONDSON-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

Johnson had never worked with Dennis Allen but hired the veteran coach as his defensive coordinator. Allen possesses 23 years of NFL experience, including six as a head coach and eight as a defensive coordinator. He coaches an attacking, aggressive defense and covets players who are fast and violent.

"We want to take the fight to the offense and not let the offense dictate the tempo to us," Allen says. "We're going to be aggressive. We're going to challenge everything. We're going to play a tough, physical brand of football — the brand of football that you come to expect of the Chicago Bears."

Poles' offseason plan to improve in the trenches was executed not only on offense but also on defense. The Bears agreed to a three-year contract with two-time Pro Bowl tackle Grady Jarrett a few hours after he was released by the Atlanta Falcons and signed free-agent end Dayo Odeyingbo. They followed by drafting Texas A&M tackle Shemar Turner in the second round.

The Bears defense features a pair of Pro Bowlers in end Montez Sweat and cornerback Jaylon Johnson. Sweat looks to rebound after his sack production dipped from 12.5 in 2023 to 5.5 in 2024. Johnson excels in coverage and will get to display those skills under Allen, who likes using man-to-man coverage in his defense.

Veteran linebackers Tremaine Edmunds and T.J. Edwards should thrive in Allen's system. Edmunds is long, fast and athletic, while Edwards is instinctual, aggressive and tough. The Bears rewarded Edwards — a Chicago-area native — with a two-year contract extension through 2027.

Poles also inked nickelback Kyler Gordon to a three-year extension through 2028. The first player Poles drafted as Bears GM, Gordon has registered 207 tackles, five interceptions, 17 pass breakups, nine tackles for a loss, 1.5 sacks, four fumble recoveries and two forced fumbles across three seasons. When Allen was introduced to the media after being hired as DC, Gordon was the first player he mentioned. Allen plans on having Gordon practice at a second position — outside corner or safety — to get him on the field more in the base defense.

## SPECIALISTS

The only coordinator whom Johnson retained was special teams coordinator Richard Hightower, who returns for his fourth season in that role. Last year, the Bears' special teams unit ranked fifth in the NFL in DVOA and had three different individuals win player of the week awards. Cairo Santos (eight field goals of 50-plus yards) and punter Tory Taylor (gross and net averages of 47.7 and 41.2 yards, respectively) set single-season franchise records.

Santos is the most accurate field-goal kicker in Bears history, having made 89.3% of his attempts (134-of-150) in 85 games. Last year, he connected on 84.0% (21-of-25) of his tries, including a 51-yarder as time expired in the season finale to beat the Packers 24-22 in Green Bay.

The Bears signed two accomplished return specialists in free agency. Devin Duvernay was named to the Pro Bowl as a return specialist with the Baltimore Ravens in 2021 and 2022 and was chosen first-team All-Pro in 2021 when he led the NFL with a 13.8-yard punt return average. Last year, Olamide Zaccheaus averaged 10.5 yards on 17 punt returns with the Washington Commanders.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Johnson has brought energy and positive vibes to the Bears, who will look to rebound from a disappointing 5-12 season that included a 10-game losing streak and cost Matt Eberflus his job. The Bears believe that they have better talent than a 5-12 record would indicate and made key offseason additions to address needs on the offensive and defensive lines. The Bears play in a rugged division — all three other teams qualified for the playoffs in 2024 — but they are still optimistic about making big strides this season.

By hiring Johnson and surrounding Williams with a fortified offensive line and a bevy of playmakers, the front office is positioning their quarterback for success. Williams' development will be the most significant storyline in Chicago in 2025.

## 2024 RESULTS (5-12)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Tennessee | W | 24-17 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Houston | L | 13-19 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Indianapolis | L | 16-21 |
| Sept. | 29 | L.A. Rams | W | 24-18 |
| Oct. | 6 | Carolina | W | 26-10 |
| Oct. | 13 | Jacksonville | W | 35-16 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Washington | L | 15-18 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Arizona | L | 9-29 |
| Nov. | 10 | New England | L | 3-19 |
| Nov. | 17 | Green Bay | L | 19-20 |
| Nov. | 24 | Minnesota (ot) | L | 27-30 |
| Nov. | 28 | at Detroit | L | 20-23 |
| Dec. | 8 | at San Francisco | L | 13-38 |
| Dec. | 16 | at Minnesota | L | 12-30 |
| Dec. | 22 | Detroit | L | 17-34 |
| Dec. | 26 | Seattle | L | 3-6 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Green Bay | W | 24-22 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 283.5 | 32 | 16 |
| Rushing | 102.0 | 25 | 14 |
| Passing | 181.5 | 31 | 16 |
| Scoring | 18.2 | 28 | 15 |
| Third Down % | 32.9 | 31 | 16 |
| Points/Play | 0.291 | 28 | 15 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 354.2 | 27 | 13 |
| Rushing | 136.3 | 28 | 12 |
| Passing | 217.9 | 16 | 8 |
| Scoring | 21.8 | 13 | 6 |
| Interceptions | 11 | T19 | T10 |
| Sacks | 40 | T16 | 10 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.360 | 17 | 9 |
| TO Differential | +8 | 9 | 5 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caleb Williams | 562 | 351 | 3,541 | 20 | 6 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| D'Andre Swift | 253 | 959 | 3.8 | 6 |
| Caleb Williams | 81 | 489 | 6.0 | 0 |
| Roschon Johnson | 55 | 150 | 2.7 | 6 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DJ Moore | 98 | 966 | 9.9 | 6 |
| Keenan Allen | 70 | 744 | 10.6 | 7 |
| Rome Odunze | 54 | 734 | 13.6 | 3 |
| Cole Kmet | 47 | 474 | 10.1 | 4 |
| D'Andre Swift | 42 | 386 | 9.2 | 0 |
| Roschon Johnson | 16 | 104 | 6.5 | 0 |

**KICKING:** Cairo Santos, 21-25 FGs, 25-26 PATs, 88 points

**TACKLES:** Kevin Byard III, 130; T.J. Edwards, 129

**SACKS:** Montez Sweat, 5.5; Gervon Dexter Sr., 5.0

**INTERCEPTIONS:** Jaylon Johnson, 2; Tyrique Stevenson, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**WORKOUT PARTNERS** **Colston Loveland** played his first two seasons at Michigan in 2022-23 under head coach Jim Harbaugh, who also played for Michigan and was a Bears first-round draft pick (in 1987). When Harbaugh made a recruiting trip to Golding, Idaho, to visit Loveland when he was a high school senior, it was a huge deal. Said Loveland: "That was cool. The whole town was buzzing, for sure. He came in at night, stayed the night at my grandparents' place. He's like, 'What time are we working out tomorrow?' We went in there at 7:30 a.m. He was in his khakis, in his shoes, doing squats with me. We did a whole workout. It was pretty cool."

**GOOD COMPANY** Loveland is the third tight end the Bears have selected in the first round of a draft, joining Hall of Famer Mike Ditka (1961) and Greg Olsen (2007).

**THE LAST PIECE** The selection of Luther Burden III was the final part of a blockbuster trade between the Bears and the Carolina Panthers in 2023. The Bears sent the No. 1 pick in the 2023 draft to Carolina, which chose quarterback Bryce Young. In return, Chicago received wideout DJ Moore and draft picks that were spent on offensive tackle Darnell Wright and cornerback Tyrique Stevenson in 2023, quarterback Caleb Williams and punter Tory Taylor in 2024 and Burden in 2025.

**HELLO, NEWMAN!** Seinfeld fans will be interested to know that the Bears now have a Newman (sixth-round pick Luke) and a Kramer (fourth-year pro Doug) in their offensive line room.

# SCOUTING THE BEARS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CHICAGO

"Caleb Williams was running for his life at times. Unlike most rookies, though, Williams displayed uncommon poise and improvisational ability, and his ad-libbing skills extended plays as he completed passes from a variety of angles. There's a lot of belief in Williams at Halas Hall. … The Bears were smart with their offseason moves, building a better offensive line by spending on Joe Thuney, Drew Dalman and Jonah Jackson to go with returning tackles Braxton Jones and Darnell Wright. They can be more competitive now and protect Williams. … There will be a lot of opportunities for two rookie skill players: wide receiver Luther Burden III, who enters the NFL with a bit of a diva reputation, and tight end Colston Loveland, who's a really good prospect to work in tandem with Cole Kmet. … Ben Johnson built a great running game in Detroit. He can get that done again with D'Andre Swift and Roschon Johnson. … I didn't really understand why Atlanta moved on from Grady Jarrett, but the Bears are glad they did. … The plan is to get rookie Shemar Turner ready to contribute early. … Montez Sweat doesn't really get his due respect as one of the better edges in the NFL. … They've got a big investment at linebacker in T.J. Edwards and Tremaine Edmunds. Most teams don't spend that much on that position anymore. … This secondary has been put together thoughtfully by Ryan Poles with Jaylon Johnson, the shutdown corner, opposite Tyrique Stevenson, who's solid, two good safeties in Jaquan Brisker and Kevin Byard III and the highest-paid nickel in the NFL with Kyler Gordon."

JUNFU HAN

## 2025 BEARS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 Bagent, Tyson | QB | 6-3 | 213 | 2 | Shepherd | FA-23 | FA-Chi-23 |
| 11 Keenum, Case | QB | 6-1 | 215 | 12 | Houston | FA-Hou-25 | FA-Hou-12 |
| 16 Reed, Austin | QB | 6-2 | 220 | 1 | WKU | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 18 Williams, Caleb | QB | 6-1 | 215 | 1 | USC | D1a-24 | D1a-Chi-24 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 Homer, Travis | RB | 5-10 | 202 | 6 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-Sea-23 | D6a-Sea-19 |
| 23 Johnson, Roschon | RB | 6-2 | 222 | 2 | Texas | D4a-23 | D4a-Chi-23 |
| 4 Swift, D'Andre | RB | 5-9 | 208 | 5 | Georgia | FA-Phi-24 | D2-Det-20 |
| 33 Wheeler, Ian | RB | 5-11 | 205 | 1 | Howard | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 Alexander, Maurice | WR | 5-11 | 174 | 1 | FIU | FA-25 | FA-Det-22 |
| 84 Boykin, Miles | WR | 6-4 | 222 | 6 | Notre Dame | FA-25 | D3-Bal-19 |
| 88 Carlson, Stephen | TE | 6-4 | 240 | 3 | Princeton | FA-Cle-23 | FA-Cle-19 |
| 12 Duvernay, Devin | WR | 5-11 | 202 | 5 | Texas | FA-Jac-25 | D3b-Bal-20 |
| 82 Jackson, John | WR | 6-1 | 215 | 1 | Nevada | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 85 Kmet, Cole | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 5 | Notre Dame | D2a-20 | D2a-Chi-20 |
| 2 Moore, DJ | WR | 6-0 | 210 | 7 | Maryland | T-Car-23 | D1-Car-18 |
| 87 Murray, Jordan | TE | 6-5 | 240 | 1 | Hawai'i | FA-25 | FA-Hou-23 |
| 15 Odunze, Rome | WR | 6-3 | 215 | 1 | Washington | D1b-24 | D1b-Chi-24 |
| 10 Scott, Tyler | WR | 5-11 | 185 | 2 | Cincinnati | D4b-23 | D4b-Chi-23 |
| 81 Smythe, Durham | TE | 6-6 | 246 | 7 | Notre Dame | FA-Mia-25 | D4a-Mia-18 |
| 87 Sweeney, Tommy | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 6 | Boston College | FA-24 | D7-Buf-19 |
| 83 Toure, Samori | WR | 6-1 | 191 | 3 | Nebraska | FA-24 | D7-GB-22 |
| 86 Wilson, Joel | TE | 6-4 | 242 | 1 | Central Michigan | FA-24 | FA-Buf-23 |
| 14 Zaccheaus, Olamide | WR | 5-8 | 193 | 6 | Virginia | FA-Was-25 | FA-Atl-19 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 72 Amegadjie, Kiran | OL | 6-5 | 326 | 1 | Yale | D3-24 | D3-Chi-24 |
| 71 Bates, Ryan | OL | 6-4 | 302 | 6 | Penn State | T-Buf-24 | FA-Phi-19 |
| 62 Benedet, Theo | OL | 6-7 | 305 | 1 | British Columbia | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 52 Dalman, Drew | OL | 6-3 | 305 | 4 | Stanford | FA-Atl-25 | D4b-Atl-21 |
| 63 Glaser, Chris | OL | 6-4 | 306 | 1 | Virginia | FA-24 | FA-KC-22 |
| 73 Jackson, Jonah | OL | 6-4 | 315 | 5 | Ohio State | T-LAR-25 | D3b-Det-20 |
| 70 Jones, Braxton | OL | 6-5 | 310 | 3 | Southern Utah | D5a-22 | D5a-Chi-22 |
| 68 Kramer Jr., Doug | OL | 6-2 | 300 | 2 | Illinois | FA-24 | D6c-Chi-22 |
| 74 McFadden, Jordan | OL | 6-2 | 303 | 2 | Clemson | W-LAC-25 | D5-LAC-23 |
| 78 Miles, Joshua | T | 6-5 | 325 | 4 | Morgan State | FA-25 | D7-Ari-19 |
| 60 Murray, Bill | OL | 6-4 | 307 | 2 | William & Mary | FA-23 | FA-NE-20 |
| 67 Stromberg, Ricky | OL | 6-4 | 313 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-24 | D3-Was-23 |
| 62 Thuney, Joe | G | 6-5 | 304 | 9 | NC State | T-KC-25 | D3a-NE-16 |
| 58 Wright, Darnell | OL | 6-6 | 333 | 2 | Tennessee | D1-23 | D1-Chi-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 Billings, Andrew | DL | 6-1 | 311 | 8 | Baylor | FA-LV-23 | D4-Cin-16 |
| 94 Booker, Austin | DL | 6-6 | 245 | 1 | Kansas | D5-24 | D5-Chi-24 |
| 99 Dexter Sr., Gervon | DL | 6-6 | 312 | 2 | Florida | D2a-23 | D2a-Chi-23 |
| 92 Hardy, Daniel | DL | 6-3 | 240 | 2 | Montana State | FA-23 | D7-LAR-22 |
| 50 Jarrett, Grady | DL | 6-0 | 290 | 10 | Clemson | FA-Atl-25 | D5-Atl-15 |
| 59 Kromah, Jamree | DL | 6-4 | 275 | 1 | James Madison | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 55 Odeyingbo, Dayo | DL | 6-6 | 286 | 4 | Vanderbilt | FA-Ind-25 | D2-Ind-21 |
| 96 Pickens, Zacch | DL | 6-4 | 304 | 2 | South Carolina | D3-23 | D3-Chi-23 |
| 67 Roberts, Sam | DL | 6-5 | 300 | 3 | NW Missouri St. | D6b-22 | D6b-Chi-22 |
| 90 Robinson, Dominique | DL | 6-5 | 253 | 3 | Miami (Ohio) | D5b-22 | D5b-Chi-22 |
| 98 Sweat, Montez | DL | 6-6 | 262 | 6 | Mississippi State | T-Was-23 | D1b-Was-19 |
| 91 Williams, Chris | DL | 6-3 | 302 | 3 | Wagner | T-Cle-24 | FA-Ind-20 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 Bozeman, Swayze | LB | 6-1 | 224 | 1 | Southern Miss | FA-25 | FA-KC-24 |
| 49 Edmunds, Tremaine | LB | 6-5 | 250 | 7 | Virginia Tech | FA-Buf-23 | D1b-Buf-18 |
| 53 Edwards, T.J. | LB | 6-1 | 242 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-Phi-23 | FA-Phi-19 |
| 50 Jones Jr., Carl | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 45 Ogbongbemiga, Amen | LB | 6-0 | 231 | 4 | Oklahoma State | FA-LAC-24 | FA-LAC-21 |
| 44 Sewell, Noah | LB | 6-2 | 246 | 2 | Oregon | D5a-23 | D5a-Chi-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 Blackwell, Josh | DB | 6-0 | 175 | 3 | Duke | W-Phi-22 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 9 Brisker, Jaquan | DB | 6-1 | 200 | 3 | Penn State | D2b-22 | D2b-Chi-22 |
| 31 Byard III, Kevin | DB | 5-11 | 212 | 9 | Middle Tennessee | FA-Phi-24 | D3-Ten-16 |
| 37 Cook, Alex | DB | 6-1 | 196 | 2 | Washington | FA-25 | FA-NYG-23 |
| 6 Gordon, Kyler | DB | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | Washington | D2a-22 | D2a-Chi-22 |
| 22 Hicks, Elijah | DB | 5-11 | 200 | 3 | California | D7b-22 | D7b-Chi-22 |
| 1 Johnson, Jaylon | DB | 6-0 | 196 | 5 | Utah | D2b-20 | D2b-Chi-20 |
| 24 McCloud, Nick | CB | 6-1 | 193 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-SF-25 | FA-Buf-21 |
| 30 Moore, Tarvarius | DB | 6-1 | 200 | 5 | Southern Miss | FA-24 | D3b-SF-18 |
| 36 Owens, Jonathan | DB | 5-11 | 210 | 6 | Missouri Western | FA-GB-24 | FA-Ari-18 |
| 32 Smith, Terell | DB | 6-1 | 204 | 2 | Minnesota | D5b-23 | D5b-Chi-23 |
| 38 Speed, Ameer | DB | 6-3 | 215 | 2 | Michigan State | FA-24 | D6-NE-23 |
| 29 Stevenson, Tyrique | DB | 6-0 | 214 | 2 | Miami (Fla.) | D2b-23 | D2b-Chi-23 |
| 26 Wade, Shaun | CB | 6-1 | 195 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-LAC-25 | D5-Bal-21 |
| Wright, Nahshon | CB | 6-4 | 200 | 4 | Oregon State | FA-Min-25 | D3c-Dal-21 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 Daly, Scott | LS | 6-1 | 245 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | FA-Dal-18 |
| 8 Santos, Cairo | K | 5-8 | 175 | 11 | Tulane | FA-20 | FA-KC-14 |
| 19 Taylor, Tory | P | 6-4 | 225 | 1 | Iowa | D4-24 | D4-Chi-24 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 2 | DJ Moore | 12 | Devin Duvernay |
| WR | 15 | Rome Odunze | 10 | Tyler Scott |
| WR | 87 | Luther Burden III (R) | 14 | Olamide Zaccheaus |
| LT | 70 | Braxton Jones | 72 | Kiran Amegadjie |
| LG | 62 | Joe Thuney | 60 | Bill Murray |
| C | 52 | Drew Dalman | 68 | Doug Kramer Jr. |
| RG | 73 | Jonah Jackson | 71 | Ryan Bates |
| RT | 58 | Darnell Wright | 75 | Ozzy Trapilo (R) |
| TE | 85 | Cole Kmet | 84 | Colston Loveland (R) |
| QB | 18 | Caleb Williams | 17 | Tyson Bagent |
| RB | 4 | D'Andre Swift | 23 | Roschon Johnson |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 98 | Montez Sweat | 94 | Austin Booker |
| DT | 50 | Grady Jarrett | 95 | Shemar Turner (R) |
| DT | 99 | Gervon Dexter Sr. | 97 | Andrew Billings |
| DE | 55 | Dayo Odeyingbo | 90 | Dominique Robinson |
| SLB | 44 | Noah Sewell | 27 | Swayze Bozeman |
| MLB | 49 | Tremaine Edmunds | 47 | Ruben Hyppolite II (R) |
| WLB | 53 | T.J. Edwards | 45 | Amen Ogbongbemiga |
| CB | 1 | Jaylon Johnson | 24 | Nick McCloud |
| CB | 29 | Tyrique Stevenson | 32 | Terell Smith |
| NB | 6 | Kyler Gordon | 39 | Josh Blackwell |
| SS | 9 | Jaquan Brisker | 36 | Jonathan Owens |
| FS | 31 | Kevin Byard III | 22 | Elijah Hicks |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 8 | Cairo Santos | KR | 12 | Devin Duvernay |
| P | 19 | Tory Taylor | PR | 12 | Devin Duvernay |

**-174**

D'Andre Swift rushed for a league-worst minus-174 yards over expected last year per NFL Next Gen Stats, 62 yards behind Kareem Hunt.

## BEARS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Colston Loveland | TE | 6-6 | 248 | Michigan |
| 2 | Luther Burden III | WR | 6-0 | 206 | Missouri |
| 2 | Ozzy Trapilo | OT | 6-8 | 316 | Boston College |
| 2 | Shemar Turner | DT | 6-3 | 290 | Texas A&M |
| 4 | Ruben Hyppolite II | LB | 5-11 | 236 | Maryland |
| 5 | Zah Frazier | CB | 6-3 | 186 | UTSA |
| 6 | Luke Newman | G | 6-4 | 308 | Michigan State |
| 7 | Kyle Monangai | RB | 5-8 | 211 | Rutgers |

The Bears chose four players in the first 62 picks of the draft for the first time since 1990, including three second-rounders for the first time ever. Colston Loveland possesses a dynamic skill set and the ability to separate, excels at creating mismatches and plays with a nonstop motor. The Bears viewed Luther Burden III as the most dangerous run-after-catch receiver in the draft, a player who can win with speed, physicality and elusiveness. Ozzy Trapilo played both left and right tackle at Boston College and is considered by the Bears to be consistent, dependable, smart and tough. Shemar Turner plays with a nasty disposition and relentlessness that no doubt will endear him to his defensive coordinator as well as to the Bears' fan base.

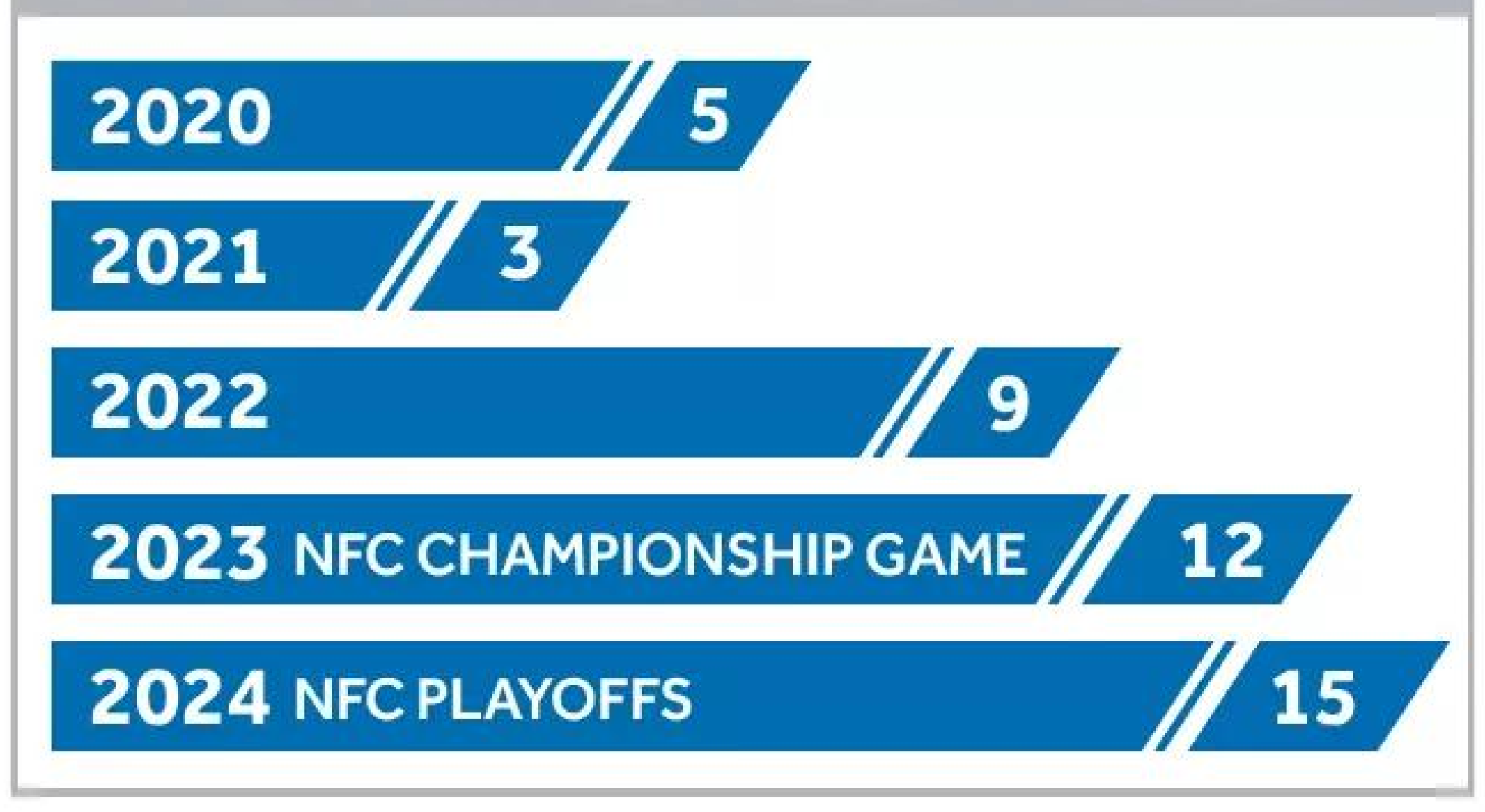
# DET LIONS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Green Bay | 4:25 |
| Sept. 14 | Chicago | 1:00 |
| Sept. 22 | at Baltimore | 8:15 |
| Sept. 28 | Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at Cincinnati | 4:25 |
| Oct. 12 | at Kansas City | 8:20 |
| Oct. 20 | Tampa Bay | 7:00 |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 2 | Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | at Washington | 4:25 |
| Nov. 16 | at Philadelphia | 8:20 |
| Nov. 23 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Nov. 27 | Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Dec. 4 | Dallas | 8:15 |
| Dec. 14 | at L.A. Rams | 4:25 |
| Dec. 21 | Pittsburgh | 4:25 |
| Dec. 25 | at Minnesota | 4:30 |
| TBD | at Chicago | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Dan Campbell
**Record With Team:** 39-28-1
**Career Record:** 44-35-1
**Offensive Coordinator:** John Morton
**Defensive Coordinator:** Kelvin Sheppard
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Dave Fipp
**Quarterbacks:** Mark Brunell
**Passing Game Coordinator:** David Shaw
**Running Backs:** Tashard Choice
**Assistant Head Coach/Wide Receivers:** Scottie Montgomery
**Tight Ends:** Tyler Roehl
**Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line:** Hank Fraley
**Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line:** Kacy Rodgers
**Linebackers:** Shaun Dion Hamilton
**Senior Defensive Assistant/Outside Linebackers:** Dave Corrao
**Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs:** Deshea Townsend
**Defensive Assistant/Safeties:** Jim O'Neil

NFC NORTH FORECAST

1

A spate of injuries marred the Detroit Lions' dream season in 2024, with six defensive starters and several key backups landing on injured reserve by season's end. Not coincidentally, Detroit allowed 30-plus points in four of its final six games, including the home playoff loss to the Washington Commanders.

But after rolling to a 15-2 regular season and earning the NFC's No. 1 seed with the league's highest-scoring offense, there's no need for an overhaul here. Instead, head coach Dan Campbell's team is ready to run it back with its talented young core, returning 20 of 22 starters in pursuit of the franchise's first Super Bowl berth. As linebacker Derrick Barnes says, "This is a winning program now. We've built a culture where going to the playoffs is not going to be enough for us."

## OFFENSE

Ben Johnson took the head-coaching job in Chicago in January after turning down other opportunities the previous two seasons. So the Lions are breaking in a new offensive coordinator for the second time in Campbell's tenure in Detroit. The good news: New play-caller John Morton was heavily involved in building this offense around quarterback Jared Goff as a special assistant under Johnson in 2021. And after spending the past two seasons as pass game coordinator with the Denver Broncos, he'll have arguably the NFL's best arsenal at his disposal now.

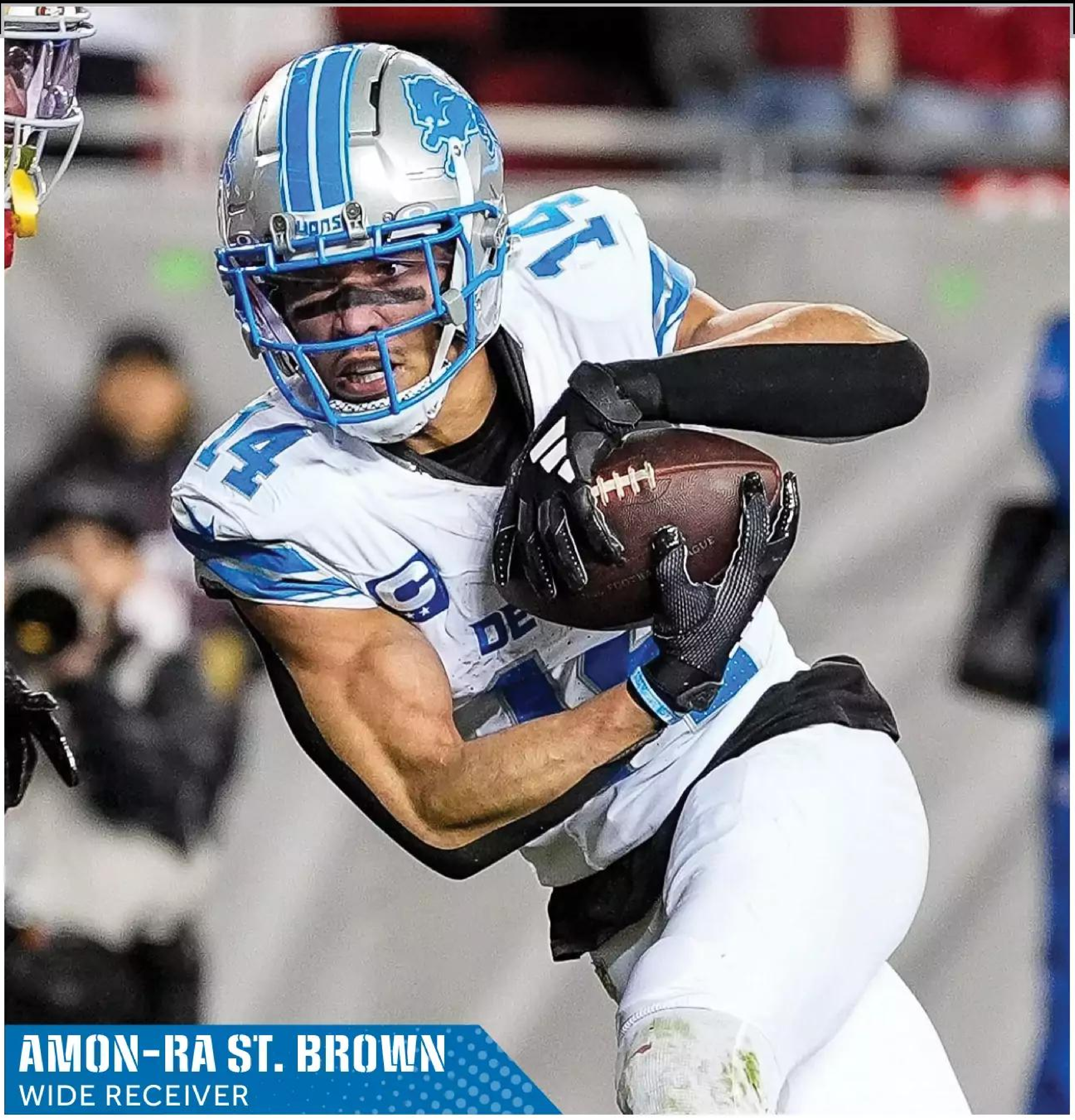
It's led by Goff, an MVP finalist last season who ranked second in the league in passing yards, completion percentage and quarterback rating. The 30-year-old is in his prime and just beginning a contract extension that could run through 2028. But more importantly, Goff has developed a strong rapport with the skill-position talent surrounding him, from wide receivers Amon-Ra St. Brown and Jameson Williams to tight end Sam LaPorta to the backfield tandem of Jahmyr Gibbs and David Montgomery.

The NFL's best running back duo combined for 3,016 scrimmage yards and 32 touchdowns in 2024, with Montgomery's hard-nosed running style setting the tone for the Lions' offense and Gibbs emerging as one of the league's most dynamic weapons. Only Derrick Henry and Saquon Barkley had more runs of 10-plus yards than Gibbs last season. Look for the Lions to find more ways to involve last year's rookie project, Sione Vaki, in the offense as well.

They all benefit by playing behind one of the league's best offensive lines, anchored by a pair of All-Pros in right tackle Penei Sewell and center Frank Ragnow. The Lions lost guard Kevin Zeitler to the Tennessee Titans in free agency, but they expect second-round pick Tate Ratledge to push for a starting job over either veteran mainstay Graham Glasgow or second-year brawler Christian Mahogany. Keeping beloved line coach Hank Fraley, a candidate for coordinator jobs elsewhere, was another coup for Campbell.

No tight end in NFL history has more receptions in his first two seasons than LaPorta, who remains a trusted third-down and red-zone target for Goff. The Lions also utilized Brock Wright's in-line strength, operating out of 12 personnel nearly a third of the time last season, the third-highest rate in the league.

Amon-Ra St. Brown signed a huge contract extension and turned in another All-Pro season, while Jameson Williams' 1,000-yard breakout added another big-play dimension to Detroit's high-powered offense. Williams had four TD catches of 50-plus yards, and Morton has made no secret about wanting to emphasize explosive plays in his scheme. Goff's search for a reliable No. 3 option



**AMON-RA ST. BROWN**
WIDE RECEIVER

finally landed on Tim Patrick, a late-preseason pickup whose big catch radius and clutch earned him plenty of praise and another contract this spring. They're backed by another reliable vet in Kalif Raymond, as well as third-round pick Isaac TeSlaa.

## DEFENSE

It's nearly impossible to gauge the improvements Detroit made defensively last season. The Lions lost two front-seven starters for the season in Week 2, then lost star defensive end Aidan Hutchinson to a broken leg in their fifth game. An opportunistic unit continued to make do despite dwindling sack production, but eventually the attrition was too much.

Hutchinson should be full-go before training camp, and by September, the Lions could make the former No. 2 overall pick the highest-paid non-quarterback in the league. The Lions also re-signed Marcus Davenport to play the big-edge role opposite Hutchinson, but a search for more pass-rush help is ongoing.

So is the transition to a new coordinator after Aaron Glenn also landed a head-coaching gig with the New York Jets. Kelvin Sheppard, the high-energy linebackers coach groomed to be Glenn's successor, figures to keep the same aggressive approach and man-heavy coverage schemes.

Underrated defensive tackle Alim McNeill may not be ready to start the season as he rehabs a torn ACL from last December. But the Lions added more depth alongside vet DJ Reader by signing former Arizona Cardinal Roy Lopez and drafting another run-stuffer in first-rounder Tyleik Williams.

They're backed by a deep linebacker corps that was also decimated by injuries last season. Alex Anzalone is the leader, but emerging star Jack Campbell is a tackling machine, and Barnes, who fills a versatile SAM role, is back on a new contract after missing most of last season with torn knee ligaments.

The Lions made Kerby Joseph the NFL's highest-paid safety in April after he led the league with nine interceptions last season. But he's not the only ball hawk on the back end, where he's paired with ultra-productive Brian Branch, who earned a Pro Bowl nod after making the switch from nickel last season.

The Lions boasted the NFL's No. 1 third-down defense and allowed the second-lowest completion percentage. And while they lost top corner Carlton Davis III to the New England Patriots, they moved quickly in free agency to replace him with D.J. Reed, whose physical, in-your-face game seems tailor-made for this defense. The key will be whether Terrion Arnold can take the next step toward filling the No. 1 role after the 2024 first-round pick experienced some growing pains as a rookie. Amik Robertson remains the feisty nickel, while Avonte Maddox — fresh off a Super Bowl title with the Philadelphia Eagles — and 2024 second-round pick Ennis Rakestraw add depth.

## SPECIALISTS

A revolving door at placekicker finally stopped on the unlikeliest story, as Jake Bates went from brick salesman to UFL standout to rookie sensation with the Lions in the span of 18 months. Bates made his first 19 field goals as a rookie and finished 26-of-29, including a league-high four go-ahead or game-tying field goals in the final two minutes or overtime.

Punter Jack Fox remains a serious weapon for the Lions, earning first-team All-Pro honors after setting an NFL record for net punting average. Raymond finished third in punt return average, and the Lions' coverage units were top five again under coordinator Dave Fipp.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Lions know it'll be hard to match the regular-season success from a year ago — especially since they're saddled with the second-toughest schedule in the league, with road trips to face Kansas City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Cincinnati and the Los Angeles Rams. Campbell wants his team to stay true to its blue-collar identity and embrace the challenge. "We're competitive, I'm competitive," he says. "So yeah, I love the thought of it, man. This is going to be a meat grinder." If the Lions can survive it, they've got the talent to win it all and plenty of hunger to match.

JUNFU HAN

## 2024 RESULTS (15-2)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | L.A. Rams (ot) | W | 26-20 |
| Sept. | 15 | Tampa Bay | L | 16-20 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Arizona | W | 20-13 |
| Sept | 30 | Seattle | W | 42-29 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Dallas | W | 47-9 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Minnesota | W | 31-29 |
| Oct. | 27 | Tennessee | W | 52-14 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Green Bay | W | 24-14 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Houston | W | 26-23 |
| Nov. | 17 | Jacksonville | W | 52-6 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Indianapolis | W | 24-6 |
| Nov. | 28 | Chicago | W | 23-20 |
| Dec. | 5 | Green Bay | W | 34-31 |
| Dec. | 15 | Buffalo | L | 42-48 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Chicago | W | 44-17 |
| Dec. | 30 | at San Francisco | W | 40-34 |
| Jan. | 5 | Minnesota | W | 31-9 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 18 | Washington | L | 31-45 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 409.5 | 2 | 1 |
| Rushing | 146.4 | 6 | 5 |
| Passing | 263.2 | 2 | 1 |
| Scoring | 33.2 | 1 | 1 |
| Third Down % | 47.6 | 4 | 2 |
| Points/Play | 0.502 | 1 | 1 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 342.4 | 20 | 8 |
| Rushing | 98.4 | 5 | 3 |
| Passing | 244.0 | 30 | 16 |
| Scoring | 20.1 | 7 | 4 |
| Interceptions | 16 | T6 | 3 |
| Sacks | 37 | T23 | T13 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.355 | 11 | 5 |
| TO Differential | +9 | 8 | 4 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jared Goff | 539 | 390 | 4,629 | 37 | 12 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jahmyr Gibbs | 250 | 1,412 | 5.6 | 16 |
| David Montgomery | 185 | 775 | 4.2 | 12 |
| Craig Reynolds | 31 | 139 | 4.5 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Amon-Ra St. Brown | 115 | 1,263 | 11.0 | 12 |
| Sam LaPorta | 60 | 726 | 12.1 | 7 |
| Jameson Williams | 58 | 1,001 | 17.3 | 7 |
| Jahmyr Gibbs | 52 | 517 | 9.9 | 4 |
| David Montgomery | 36 | 341 | 9.5 | 0 |
| Tim Patrick | 33 | 394 | 11.9 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Jake Bates, 26-29 FGs, 64-67 PATs, 142 points
**TACKLES:** Jack Campbell, 131; Brian Branch, 109
**SACKS:** Aidan Hutchinson, 7.5; Za'Darius Smith, 4.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Kerby Joseph, 9; Brian Branch, 4

## OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**NO, PACK, NO** **Terrion Arnold** became an instant fan favorite in the Motor City when he took the stage — and stole the show — as the Lions' first-round pick in the 2024 NFL Draft held in downtown Detroit. This year, he was the Lions' cheeky choice to announce their second-round pick at Green Bay's Lambeau Field, and Arnold used his encore to troll Packers fans. "You know, one year ago this weekend, I cried," Arnold said, pausing for effect as the crowd booed. "Because I thought I was going to be a Packer. But the kings of the NFC North came and saved me."

**EUROPEAN VACATION** The Lions last played an international game in 2015 in London, but they're anticipating that decade-long drought will end next year. Detroit has an extra home game in 2026, and team president Rod Wood says it's "highly likely" one of those will be played outside the U.S. That game is expected to be in Germany, where the Lions were awarded international marketing rights by the NFL, and German-speaking Amon-Ra St. Brown is among the league's most popular players.

**HOME SWEET HOME?** After considerable discussion about potentially moving the Lions' practice facility and football offices from Allen Park, their suburban home since 2002, Wood says that the team is staying put for the foreseeable future. Instead, they've poured more money into upgrades at their current headquarters, including a major renovation of the locker room and weight room this offseason.

## SCOUTING THE LIONS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DETROIT

"This is a championship squad in the making. They're the embodiment of their coach. Dan Campbell injects so much toughness and physicality with his coaching style into this team. … Jared Goff has gotten better and better. It will be instructive to see how he does with Ben Johnson now coaching the Bears. … Amon-Ra St. Brown is the consummate route-runner, but he's a lot more athletic than he gets credit for. … Having Jameson Williams as a deep threat clears out space for St. Brown and tight end Sam LaPorta. Williams needs to keep maturing off the field. … What a great offensive line. From Frank Ragnow to Penei Sewell to Taylor Decker, these guys are all tough and technique-strong. … Jahmyr Gibbs has the speed and moves. David Montgomery provides power and has some wiggle in the open field, too. This is an incredible running back duo. … When Aidan Hutchinson is back to full strength, the front seven is going to be really hard to stop. … DJ Reader is a massive, two-gapping presence inside. Alim McNeill is in a similar mold but isn't as big as Reader. … Linebacker Alex Anzalone is a smart, instinctive player who has rare coverage skills. … With Anzalone, Jack Campbell and Derrick Barnes, that's a strong trio of 'backers. … Kerby Joseph is the highest-paid safety in the NFL, which makes sense because he's the best young safety in the entire league. … There's a lot of competition amongst the defensive backs to get the football. Brian Branch is always making plays. Amik Robertson and Terrion Arnold are both quality players, too."

JUNFU HAN

## 2025 LIONS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Allen, Kyle | QB | 6-3 | 210 | 7 | Houston | FA-Pit-25 | FA-Car-18 |
| 16 | Goff, Jared | QB | 6-4 | 217 | 9 | Cal | T-LAR-21 | D1-LAR-16 |
| 2 | Hooker, Hendon | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 2 | Tennessee | D3a-23 | D3a-Det-23 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | Gibbs, Jahmyr | RB | 5-9 | 202 | 2 | Alabama | D1a-23 | D1a-Det-23 |
| 5 | Montgomery, David | RB | 5-11 | 230 | 6 | Iowa State | FA-Chi-23 | D3-Chi-19 |
| 13 | Reynolds, Craig | RB | 5-11 | 216 | 5 | Kutztown | FA-21 | FA-Was-19 |
| 33 | Vaki, Sione | RB | 5-11 | 213 | 1 | Utah | D4b-24 | D4b-Det-24 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Bell, Ronnie | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 2 | Michigan | FA-25 | D7b-SF-23 |
| 85 | Kennedy, Tom | WR | 5-10 | 195 | 3 | Bryant | FA-23 | FA-Det-19 |
| 87 | LaPorta, Sam | TE | 6-3 | 245 | 2 | Iowa | D2a-23 | D2a-Det-23 |
| 12 | Patrick, Tim | WR | 6-5 | 210 | 5 | Utah | FA-24 | FA-Bal-17 |
| 11 | Raymond, Kalif | WR | 5-8 | 180 | 8 | Holy Cross | FA-Ten-21 | FA-Den-16 |
| 14 | St. Brown, Amon-Ra | WR | 6-0 | 202 | 4 | USC | D4a-21 | D4a-Det-21 |
| 86 | Taylor, Malik | WR | 6-3 | 220 | 5 | Ferris State | FA-25 | FA-GB-19 |
| 1 | Williams, Jameson | WR | 6-1 | 180 | 3 | Alabama | D1b-22 | D1b-Det-22 |
| 89 | Wright, Brock | TE | 6-5 | 254 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-21 | FA-Det-21 |
| 88 | Yeboah, Kenny | TE | 6-4 | 250 | 4 | Ole Miss | FA-NYJ-25 | FA-NYJ-21 |
| 84 | Zylstra, Shane | TE | 6-4 | 244 | 3 | Minnesota State | FA-21 | FA-Min-21 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 74 | Awosika, Kayode | G | 6-3 | 322 | 4 | Buffalo | FA-22 | FA-Phi-21 |
| 68 | Decker, Taylor | T | 6-7 | 318 | 9 | Ohio State | D1-16 | D1-Det-16 |
| 65 | Eguakun, Kingsley | C | 6-3 | 312 | 1 | Florida | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 60 | Glasgow, Graham | OL | 6-6 | 315 | 9 | Michigan | FA-Den-23 | D3-Det-16 |
| 72 | Jones, Jamarco | T | 6-4 | 305 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D5-Sea-18 |
| 73 | Mahogany, Christian | OL | 6-3 | 322 | 1 | Boston College | D6b-24 | D6b-Det-24 |
| 59 | Manu, Giovanni | OL | 6-7 | 354 | 1 | British Columbia | D4a-24 | D4a-Det-24 |
| | Muti, Netane | G | 6-3 | 325 | 4 | Fresno State | FA-24 | D6-Den-20 |
| 62 | Niese, Michael | OL | 6-5 | 300 | 1 | Temple | FA-23 | FA-Den-22 |
| 77 | Ragnow, Frank | C | 6-5 | 310 | 7 | Arkansas | D1-18 | D1-Det-18 |
| 58 | Sewell, Penei | T | 6-5 | 335 | 4 | Oregon | D1-21 | D1-Det-21 |
| 70 | Skipper, Dan | T | 6-9 | 330 | 5 | Arkansas | FA-23 | FA-Dal-17 |
| 75 | Sorsdal, Colby | OL | 6-6 | 315 | 2 | William & Mary | D5-23 | D5-Det-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 66 | Adams, Myles | DL | 6-2 | 290 | 3 | Rice | FA-24 | FA-Car-20 |
| 92 | Davenport, Marcus | DL | 6-6 | 285 | 7 | UTSA | FA-Min-24 | D1-NO-18 |
| 97 | Hutchinson, Aidan | DL | 6-7 | 268 | 3 | Michigan | D1a-22 | D1a-Det-22 |
| 51 | Lopez, Roy | DL | 6-2 | 318 | 4 | Arizona | FA-Ari-25 | D6-Hou-21 |
| 57 | Lynn, Nate | DL | 6-3 | 252 | 1 | William & Mary | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 96 | Martin, Brodric | DL | 6-5 | 322 | 2 | WKU | D3b-23 | D3b-Det-23 |
| 54 | McNeill, Alim | DL | 6-2 | 315 | 4 | NC State | D3a-21 | D3a-Det-21 |
| 69 | Muhammad, Al-Quadin | DL | 6-3 | 250 | 7 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-24 | D6-NO-17 |
| 95 | O'Connor, Pat | DL | 6-4 | 300 | 7 | Eastern Michigan | FA-24 | D7-Det-17 |
| 91 | Onwuzurike, Levi | DL | 6-3 | 304 | 4 | Washington | D2-21 | D2-Det-21 |
| 93 | Paschal, Josh | DL | 6-3 | 282 | 3 | Kentucky | D2-22 | D2-Det-22 |
| 98 | Reader, DJ | DL | 6-3 | 335 | 9 | Clemson | FA-Cin-24 | D5b-Hou-16 |
| 90 | Smith, Chris | DL | 6-1 | 305 | 1 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | FA-Det-23 |
| 45 | Ukwu, Isaac | DL | 6-3 | 265 | 1 | Ole Miss | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 76 | Williams, Raequan | DL | 6-4 | 305 | 3 | Michigan State | FA-25 | FA-Phi-20 |
| 94 | Wingo, Mekhi | DL | 6-0 | 288 | 1 | LSU | D6a-24 | D6a-Det-24 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 50 | Agude, Mitchell | LB | 6-4 | 250 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-23 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 34 | Anzalone, Alex | LB | 6-3 | 238 | 8 | Florida | FA-NO-21 | D3b-NO-17 |
| 55 | Barnes, Derrick | LB | 6-0 | 240 | 4 | Purdue | D4b-21 | D4b-Det-21 |
| 48 | Beauplan, Abraham | LB | 6-2 | 235 | 1 | Marshall | FA-24 | FA-Min-23 |
| 46 | Campbell, Jack | LB | 6-5 | 246 | 2 | Iowa | D1b-23 | D1b-Det-23 |
| 43 | Gilbert, DaRon | LB | 6-1 | 222 | 1 | Northern Illinois | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 53 | Nowaske, Trevor | LB | 6-3 | 237 | 2 | Saginaw Valley St. | W-Ari-24 | FA-Det-23 |
| 41 | Pittman, Anthony | LB | 6-3 | 224 | 4 | Wayne State | FA-24 | FA-Det-19 |
| 44 | Rodriguez, Malcolm | LB | 5-11 | 234 | 3 | Oklahoma State | D6a-22 | D6a-Det-22 |
| 15 | Stuard, Grant | LB | 5-11 | 230 | 4 | Houston | FA-Ind-25 | D7b-TB-21 |
| 47 | Turner, Ezekiel | LB | 6-2 | 214 | 6 | Washington | FA-24 | FA-Ari-18 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Arnold, Terrion | CB | 6-0 | 198 | 1 | Alabama | D1-24 | D1-Det-24 |
| 32 | Branch, Brian | DB | 6-0 | 203 | 2 | Alabama | D2b-23 | D2b-Det-23 |
| 30 | Dorsey, Khalil | CB | 5-8 | 188 | 4 | Northern Arizona | FA-22 | FA-Bal-20 |
| 36 | Hallett II, Erick | S | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Pitt | FA-24 | D6-Jac-23 |
| 31 | Joseph, Kerby | S | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | Illinois | D3-22 | D3-Det-22 |
| 29 | Maddox, Avonte | DB | 5-9 | 184 | 7 | Pitt | FA-Phi-25 | D4a-Phi-18 |
| 26 | Norris, Morice | CB | 5-11 | 192 | 1 | Fresno State | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 9 | Rakestraw Jr., Ennis | CB | 5-11 | 191 | 1 | Missouri | D2-24 | D2-Det-24 |
| 4 | Reed, D.J. | CB | 5-9 | 188 | 7 | Kansas State | FA-NYJ-25 | D5-SF-18 |
| 21 | Robertson, Amik | CB | 5-9 | 183 | 5 | Louisiana Tech | FA-LV-24 | D4b-LV-20 |
| 24 | Strickland, Loren | S | 5-10 | 202 | 1 | Ball State | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |
| 38 | Thomas-Oliver III, S. | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 4 | FIU | FA-24 | D7-Car-20 |
| 23 | Ya-Sin, Rock | CB | 5-11 | 195 | 6 | Temple | FA-SF-25 | D2-Ind-19 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Bates, Jake | K | 5-10 | 202 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-24 | FA-TB-23 |
| 3 | Fox, Jack | P | 6-2 | 218 | 5 | Rice | FA-19 | FA-KC-19 |
| 49 | Hatten, Hogan | LS | 6-2 | 239 | 1 | Idaho | FA-24 | FA-Det-24 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 14 | Amon-Ra St. Brown | 18 | Isaac TeSlaa (R) |
| WR | 1 | Jameson Williams | 11 | Kalif Raymond |
| WR | 12 | Tim Patrick | 10 | Ronnie Bell |
| LT | 68 | Taylor Decker | 59 | Giovanni Manu |
| LG | 73 | Christian Mahogany | 71 | Miles Frazier (R) |
| C | 77 | Frank Ragnow | 62 | Michael Niese |
| RG | 60 | Graham Glasgow | 69 | Tate Ratledge (R) |
| RT | 58 | Penei Sewell | 70 | Dan Skipper |
| TE | 87 | Sam LaPorta | 89 | Brock Wright |
| QB | 16 | Jared Goff | 2 | Hendon Hooker |
| RB | 5 | David Montgomery | 0 | Jahmyr Gibbs |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 97 | Aidan Hutchinson | 91 | Levi Onwuzurike |
| NT | 98 | DJ Reader | 51 | Roy Lopez |
| DT | 54 | Alim McNeill | 78 | Tyleik Williams (R) |
| DE | 92 | Marcus Davenport | 93 | Josh Paschal |
| MLB | 34 | Alex Anzalone | 55 | Derrick Barnes |
| WLB | 46 | Jack Campbell | 44 | Malcolm Rodriguez |
| CB | 4 | D.J. Reed | 30 | Khalil Dorsey |
| CB | 6 | Terrion Arnold | 9 | Ennis Rakestraw Jr. |
| NB | 21 | Amik Robertson | | Avonte Maddox |
| SS | 31 | Kerby Joseph | 26 | Morice Norris |
| FS | 32 | Brian Branch | 24 | Loren Strickland |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 39 | Jake Bates | KR | 33 | Sione Vaki |
| P | 3 | Jack Fox | PR | 11 | Kalif Raymond |

**36.6%**

Jared Goff threw a play-action pass on 36.6% of his dropbacks in 2024 per NFL Next Gen Stats, highest in the NFL and four percentage points ahead of second-place Justin Herbert.

## LIONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tyleik Williams | DT | 6-3 | 334 | Ohio State |
| 2 | Tate Ratledge | G | 6-6 | 308 | Georgia |
| 3 | Isaac TeSlaa | WR | 6-4 | 214 | Arkansas |
| 5 | Miles Frazier | G | 6-6 | 317 | LSU |
| 6 | Ahmed Hassanein | Edge | 6-2 | 267 | Boise State |
| 7 | Dan Jackson | S | 6-1 | 194 | Georgia |
| 7 | Dominic Lovett | WR | 5-10 | 185 | Georgia |

Tyleik Williams fills a need with starter Alim McNeill rehabbing a torn ACL, but he should be heir apparent to DJ Reader's spot in 2026 and beyond. The Lions gave up a fourth-round pick to move up a few spots to land Tate Ratledge, a mullet-wearing mauler who should start as a rookie. Another costly trade-up target on Day 2, Isaac TeSlaa is an elite athlete with excellent ball skills and toughness. Detroit doubled up on guard help with Miles Frazier, another big body who didn't allow a sack in 13 starts as a senior at LSU. Ahmed Hassanein, the first Egyptian drafted in the NFL, is relatively new to football but was hugely productive at Boise State. Dan Jackson's comfort in split-zone scheme helps, but his core special-teams work earned him this shot. Dominic Lovett is a slot receiver with speed, but he'll need to clean up the drops and add value as a gunner.

# GB PACKERS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Detroit | 4:25 |
| Sept. 11 | Washington | 8:15 |
| Sept. 21 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | at Dallas | 8:20 |
| Oct. 5 | BYE | |
| Oct. 12 | Cincinnati | 4:25 |
| Oct. 19 | at Arizona | 4:25 |
| Oct. 26 | at Pittsburgh | 8:20 |
| Nov. 2 | Carolina | 1:00 |
| Nov. 10 | Philadelphia | 8:15 |
| Nov. 16 | at N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | Minnesota | 1:00 |
| Nov. 27 | at Detroit | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | Chicago | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Denver | 4:25 |
| TBD | at Chicago | |
| TBD | Baltimore | |
| TBD | at Minnesota | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| **2020** NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 13 |
| **2021** NFC PLAYOFFS | 13 |
| **2022** | 8 |
| **2023** NFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| **2024** NFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Matt LaFleur
**Record With Team:** 67-33
**Career Record:** 67-33
**Offensive Coordinator:** Adam Stenavich
**Defensive Coordinator:** Jeff Hafley
**Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator:** Rich Bisaccia
**Quarterbacks:** Sean Mannion
**Running Backs:** Ben Sirmans
**Wide Receivers:** Ryan Mahaffey
**Passing Game Coordinator:** Jason Vrable
**Tight Ends:** John Dunn
**Offensive Line:** Luke Butkus
**Passing Game Coordinator (Defense):** Derrick Ansley
**Defensive Backs:** Ryan Downard

NFC NORTH FORECAST

2

Brian Gutekunst delivered his declaration just days after the Green Bay Packers' season had come to a dispiriting end. His team had lost to the eventual Super Bowl LIX champion Philadelphia Eagles, and even after making the playoffs in back-to-back seasons following the Aaron Rodgers era, the Packers general manager seemingly wanted to emphasize that good isn't good enough.

"I think for me, the thing that's been on my mind as we concluded this season is, we need to continue to ramp up our sense of urgency," Gutekunst said that afternoon. "These opportunities don't come [often]. The life of a player in the National Football League is not very long. We've got a bunch of good guys in that locker room, we've got a bunch of talented guys in that locker room, and I think it's time we started competing for championships.

"I think they're ready."

In their two seasons since transitioning away from Rodgers, the Packers have gone 20-14 and earned the seventh and final NFC postseason berth each year with 2020 first-round pick Jordan Love as their franchise quarterback.

But after they finished the 2023 regular season on a three-game winning streak, dismantled a Dallas Cowboys team in the NFC Wild Card Round and had the San Francisco 49ers on the ropes until a late collapse, the 2024 Packers lost their final two regular-season games to the NFC North rival Minnesota Vikings and Chicago Bears, then turned the ball over four times and accomplished next to nothing offensively in the loss to the Eagles.

Now, though, they feel like they are primed to truly contend.

"But, at the end of the day, it doesn't really matter how you feel. It's about what you do. I think that's the challenge," says Matt LaFleur, who is 67-33 in the regular season (3-5 in the postseason) through six seasons as head coach. "To me, if you want more and you want to go further, you've got to be willing to give more. That's what we've got to do."

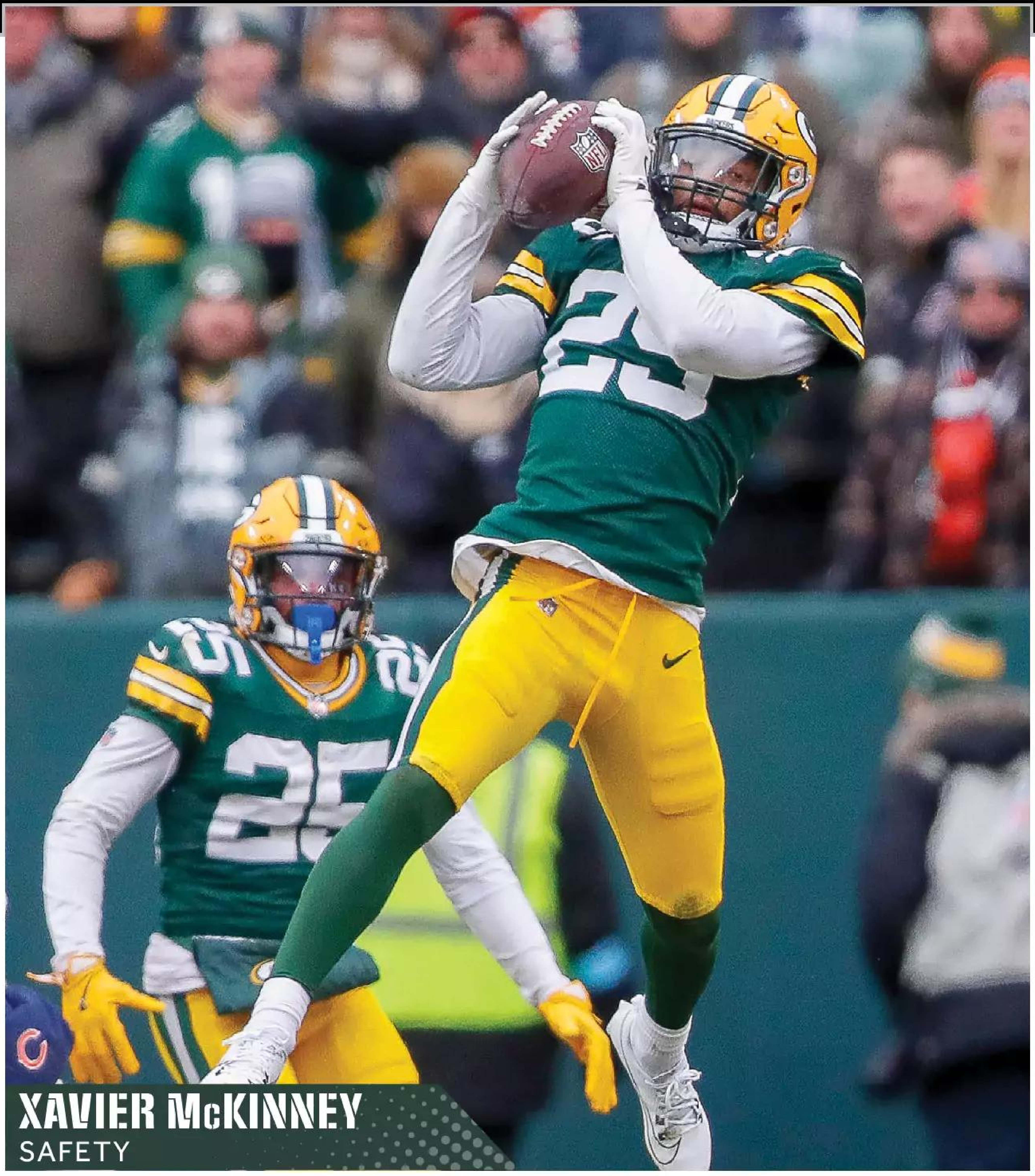
## OFFENSE

Love described his second season as the starter as "inconsistent," which feels like a fair assessment. Early-season knee and groin injuries hampered his mobility, and his would-be pass-catchers dropped 33 passes, which certainly did not help his 63.1% completion rate. Still, he wasn't good enough, and what's great about him is that he's the first to admit as much.

Bruising running back Josh Jacobs was the engine that made the offense go last season (1,329 rushing yards, 15 touchdowns in his first season in Green Bay), and LaFleur began the offseason seemingly intent on running the offense through Jacobs and the dynamic duo of Tucker Kraft and Luke Musgrave at tight end, with Kraft (50 receptions for 707 yards and a team-best seven touchdowns) the passing game centerpiece.

That emphasis could shift after Gutekunst drafted Texas wide receiver Matthew Golden in the first round and TCU wideout/Swiss army knife Savion Williams in the third. Even with Christian Watson sidelined likely until November, the Packers believe Jayden Reed and Dontayvion Wicks will make major Year 3 jumps after not elevating their games as much as they'd hoped last year.

Up front, the Packers are in transition and appear to want bigger, road-grading linemen to bolster Jacobs' physical running style. The free-agent signing of 6-foot-5, 325-pound left guard Aaron Banks and the selection of 6-foot-6, 335-pound tackle Anthony Belton in the second round of the draft fit that narrative.



**XAVIER McKINNEY**
SAFETY

TORK MASON/USA TODAY NETWORK-WISCONSIN

The rest of the line is in flux, with Pro Bowl guard Elgton Jenkins moving to center and incumbent starting left tackle Rasheed Walker competing in training camp with 2024 first-round pick Jordan Morgan to keep his job. Only athletic right tackle Zach Tom and right guard Sean Rhyan appear entrenched at their positions.

"We're always looking for opportunities to upgrade and/or bring in more competition," LaFleur says of the offseason moves on offense. "I think that's exactly what we did."

## DEFENSE

After years of mediocrity — or worse — on defense, the Packers seemingly have found something in defensive coordinator Jeff Hafley, whose unit finished 2024 ranked sixth in scoring defense (19.9 points per game) and fifth in total defense (314.5 yards per game) and somehow managed to tie for eighth in sacks (45) despite a pedestrian front four.

Gutekunst didn't address the defensive line until Day 3 of the draft in April, which lent credence to his claim that the Packers had "everything we need" to generate a pass rush with recent first-round picks Rashan Gary, Kenny Clark, Devonte Wyatt and Lukas Van Ness as their front four.

"We've invested in that quite a bit already, and I'm excited to see the growth that those guys will have," Gutekunst says.

The same could be said at cornerback, where the team didn't address the position until the seventh round despite offseason uncertainty about Jaire Alexander after back-to-back injury-derailed seasons. Despite confidence in Keisean Nixon, Carrington Valentine and offseason free-agent addition Nate Hobbs, corner would seem to be the biggest question mark on the roster.

The opposite is true at safety, where veteran Xavier McKinney got three rookie cohorts last year (Evan Williams, Javon Bullard, Kitan Oladapo) and not only earned first-team All-Pro accolades himself but also mentored his young teammates into significant contributors.

Second-year linebacker Edgerrin Cooper emerged as a field-tilter during the second half of his rookie season (3.5 sacks, 13 tackles for a loss, seven quarterback hits, an interception, a forced fumble and two fumble recoveries). "Obviously he's incredibly gifted, incredibly talented. And everybody can see the splash plays," LaFleur says in challenging Cooper to continue growing. "It's, can you make all the routine plays when they're there? I just think the more he plays, the better he's going to get and the more big plays he'll be able to make."

## SPECIALISTS

It took only two failed rookie kickers for the Packers to finally find a reliable veteran, which is exactly what Brandon McManus was. He missed just one field-goal attempt — and nailed two game-winners — after joining the team in mid-October, and after he signed a three-year deal, the job is in good hands. Punter Daniel Whelan is also trending in the right direction, and if Nixon resumes his All-Pro return form, the special teams units could become a strength instead of a liability.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Love confessed after the season that "there were definitely a lot more expectations coming into" the 2024 season, and the team did not rise to the occasion, going 1-5 in the NFC North and a combined 0-6 against the Eagles, Detroit Lions and Minnesota Vikings. After having the NFL's youngest roster each of the past two years, it's time for Love to prove that he's a top-tier quarterback; for LaFleur to show he belongs in the conversation with Sean McVay and Kyle Shanahan as one of the league's brightest offensive minds; and for the young receivers and tight ends to elevate their games. If those things happen, and the defense is even better in Year 2 in Hafley's scheme, this is a Super Bowl-caliber crew.

## 2024 RESULTS (11-6)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 6 | Philadelphia | L | 29-34 |
| Sept. | 15 | Indianapolis | W | 16-10 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Tennessee | W | 30-14 |
| Sept. | 29 | Minnesota | L | 29-31 |
| Oct. | 6 | at L.A. Rams | W | 24-19 |
| Oct. | 13 | Arizona | W | 34-13 |
| Oct. | 20 | Houston | W | 24-22 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Jacksonville | W | 30-27 |
| Nov. | 3 | Detroit | L | 14-24 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Chicago | W | 20-19 |
| Nov. | 24 | San Francisco | W | 38-10 |
| Nov. | 28 | Miami | W | 30-17 |
| Dec. | 5 | at Detroit | L | 31-34 |
| Dec. | 15 | at Seattle | W | 30-13 |
| Dec. | 23 | New Orleans | W | 34-0 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Minnesota | L | 25-27 |
| Jan. | 5 | Chicago | L | 22-24 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | at Philadelphia | L | 10-22 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 370.8 | 5 | 4 |
| Rushing | 146.8 | 5 | 4 |
| Passing | 223.9 | 12 | 9 |
| Scoring | 27.1 | 8 | 5 |
| Third Down % | 39.5 | T14 | 8 |
| Points/Play | 0.432 | 8 | 5 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 314.5 | 5 | 2 |
| Rushing | 99.4 | 7 | 4 |
| Passing | 215.2 | 13 | 6 |
| Scoring | 19.9 | 6 | 3 |
| Interceptions | 17 | T3 | 2 |
| Sacks | 45 | T8 | T4 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.329 | 5 | 3 |
| TO Differential | +12 | T3 | T1 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jordan Love | 425 | 268 | 3,389 | 25 | 11 |
| Malik Willis | 54 | 40 | 550 | 3 | 0 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Josh Jacobs | 301 | 1,329 | 4.4 | 15 |
| Emanuel Wilson | 103 | 502 | 4.9 | 4 |
| Chris Brooks | 36 | 183 | 5.1 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jayden Reed | 55 | 857 | 15.6 | 6 |
| Tucker Kraft | 50 | 707 | 14.1 | 7 |
| Romeo Doubs | 46 | 601 | 13.1 | 4 |
| Dontayvion Wicks | 39 | 415 | 10.6 | 5 |
| Josh Jacobs | 36 | 342 | 9.5 | 1 |
| Christian Watson | 29 | 620 | 21.4 | 2 |

**KICKING:** Brandon McManus, 20-21 FGs, 30-30 PATs, 90 points
**TACKLES:** Quay Walker, 102; Isaiah McDuffie, 97
**SACKS:** Rashan Gary, 7.5; Devonte Wyatt, 5.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Xavier McKinney, 8; 2 players tied with 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**ALL-PRO … PICKLEBALLER?** **Tucker Kraft** has some big goals for his third NFL season, and he and fellow tight end Luke Musgrave have added an unusual competitive element to their offseason workouts: pickleball. The duo went at it all offseason long at The Picklr, the new indoor pickleball club on Holmgren Way in Green Bay, going so far as to challenge head coach Matt LaFleur to a doubles match with an assistant coach of his choosing. "It doesn't matter if you're a teenager or an elderly person. You can get this smoke," Kraft bragged. "I'll take a drop shot on a 90-year-old. I'm not afraid. I learned how to play [over the winter], and I probably play five hours a week now. It's great." Asked who's the better pickleballer of the two 2023 draft classmates, who've both stayed in Green Bay throughout the offseason, Kraft confessed, "Luke Musgrave is better than me. He told me he almost quit football when he was in high school to play tennis. So that's my excuse."

MARK HOFFMAN/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

**WE PICKED WHO?** With the draft being held in Green Bay, the Packers' selection of Matthew Golden was announced by retiring president/CEO Mark Murphy, whose dream it was to bring the event to Titletown. Murphy emphatically announced the Golden pick, which ended a more than two-decade drought in which the Packers hadn't taken a wide receiver in the first round. After the thunderous ovation Murphy received, general manager Brian Gutekunst joked, "I really sent in a different name, but Mark just announced what he announced." Gutekunst then turned serious, saying that while he turned down some tempting trade offers, he was glad Murphy could have such a memorable moment. "I didn't think about any of that until he got up there and you saw the crowd — they were all Green Bay fans — and you heard the chants and all that stuff," Gutekunst said. "It was just kind of like, 'Wow, that's pretty neat.'"

# SCOUTING THE PACKERS

## OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP GREEN BAY

"That knee injury held back Jordan Love. He was on course for a really big year if not for the time he missed. It looked like he rushed himself back a little bit too soon. … The Packers really didn't have a true No. 1 receiver. They have that now in Matthew Golden. He's a legit 4.29 speed guy who can run every route. Having him to work alongside Jayden Reed, Romeo Doubs and Christian Watson is going to create instant matchup problems. … That's a pretty rock-solid offensive line, especially Elgton Jenkins and Zach Tom. … Anthony Belton, the rookie tackle, has lost about 30 pounds. He was quick for his size last season. Now, he should be able to move even better. He was about 370 pounds at one point. He's down to 335 pounds. … Tucker Kraft is a very good tight end. A lot of teams would be happy to have him as their TE1. … What can you say about Josh Jacobs that hasn't already been said? He's in the top three or four backs in the NFL. He's got size, power, moves, speed, catches the football, loves contact, runs through you and runs around you. Total package. … It's a good front seven headlined by Rashan Gary, Kenny Clark, Quay Walker and Edgerrin Cooper. … Very few linebackers, or running backs, can run as fast as Cooper (4.41 speed). … Xavier McKinney was a home-run free-agent signing. They haven't had a safety like him in a long time. … Getting Nate Hobbs in free agency to be their nickel was a great move by Brian Gutekunst. Hobbs was the Raiders' best DB."

## 2025 PACKERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Clifford, Sean | QB | 6-2 | 218 | 2 | Penn State | D5a-23 | D5a-GB-23 |
| 10 | Love, Jordan | QB | 6-4 | 219 | 5 | Utah State | D1-20 | D1-GB-20 |
| 2 | Willis, Malik | QB | 6-1 | 225 | 3 | Liberty | T-Ten-24 | D3b-Ten-22 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | Brooks, Chris | RB | 6-1 | 219 | 2 | BYU | FA-24 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 35 | Fenwick, Deshaun | RB | 6-1 | 223 | 1 | Oregon State | FA-24 | FA-NE-24 |
| 8 | Jacobs, Josh | RB | 5-10 | 223 | 6 | Alabama | FA-LV-24 | D1b-LV-19 |
| 32 | Lloyd, MarShawn | RB | 5-9 | 220 | 1 | USC | D3a-24 | D3a-GB-24 |
| 38 | Merriweather, Ellis | RB | 6-1 | 220 | 1 | UMass | FA-23 | FA-NO-23 |
| 31 | Wilson, Emanuel | RB | 5-10 | 226 | 2 | Fort Valley State | FA-23 | FA-GB-23 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 87 | Doubs, Romeo | WR | 6-2 | 204 | 3 | Nevada | D4a-22 | D4a-GB-22 |
| 86 | FitzPatrick, John | TE | 6-7 | 262 | 3 | Georgia | PS-Atl-24 | D6b-Atl-22 |
| 6 | Hardman, Mecole | WR | 5-10 | 187 | 6 | Georgia | FA-KC-25 | D2a-KC-19 |
| 18 | Heath, Malik | WR | 6-2 | 213 | 2 | Ole Miss | FA-23 | FA-GB-23 |
| 81 | Hicks, Julian | WR | 6-2 | 201 | 1 | UAlbany | FA-24 | FA-GB-24 |
| | Janke, Jaxon | WR | 6-3 | 210 | 1 | South Dakota St. | FA-25 | FA-Hou-24 |
| 83 | Johnson, Cornelius | WR | 6-3 | 212 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | D7-LAC-24 |
| 85 | Kraft, Tucker | TE | 6-5 | 259 | 2 | South Dakota St. | D3-23 | D3-GB-23 |
| 43 | Lumpkin, Johnny | TE | 6-5 | 264 | 1 | Louisiana | FA-25 | FA-NE-23 |
| 16 | McGough, Alex | WR | 6-3 | 214 | 1 | FIU | FA-23 | D7-Sea-18 |
| 80 | Melton, Bo | WR | 5-11 | 189 | 1 | Rutgers | PS-Sea-22 | D7-Sea-22 |
| 88 | Musgrave, Luke | TE | 6-6 | 253 | 2 | Oregon State | D2a-23 | D2a-GB-23 |
| 11 | Reed, Jayden | WR | 5-11 | 187 | 2 | Michigan State | D2b-23 | D2b-GB-23 |
| 89 | Sims, Ben | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 2 | Baylor | W-Min-23 | FA-Min-23 |
| 48 | Swinson, Messiah | TE | 6-7 | 259 | 1 | Arizona State | FA-24 | FA-GB-24 |
| 9 | Watson, Christian | WR | 6-4 | 208 | 3 | North Dakota St. | D2-22 | D2-GB-22 |
| 13 | Wicks, Dontayvion | WR | 6-1 | 206 | 2 | Virginia | D5b-23 | D5b-GB-23 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Banks, Aaron | G | 6-5 | 325 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-SF-25 | D2-SF-21 |
| 79 | Glover, Travis | T | 6-6 | 317 | 1 | Georgia State | D6-24 | D6-GB-24 |
| 64 | Hill, Trey | C | 6-4 | 310 | 4 | Georgia | FA-25 | D6a-Cin-21 |
| 74 | Jenkins, Elgton | G/T | 6-5 | 311 | 6 | Mississippi State | D2-19 | D2-GB-19 |
| 67 | Jennings, Donovan | G/T | 6-4 | 323 | 1 | South Florida | FA-24 | FA-GB-24 |
| 70 | Jordan, Michael | OL | 6-6 | 315 | 5 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D4-Cin-19 |
| 62 | Monk, Jacob | C/G | 6-3 | 308 | 1 | Duke | D5a-24 | D5a-GB-24 |
| 77 | Morgan, Jordan | T/G | 6-5 | 311 | 1 | Arizona | D1-24 | D1-GB-24 |
| 75 | Rhyan, Sean | G | 6-5 | 321 | 3 | UCLA | D3-22 | D3-GB-22 |
| 76 | Telfort, Kadeem | T | 6-7 | 322 | 1 | UAB | FA-23 | FA-GB-23 |
| 50 | Tom, Zach | OL | 6-4 | 304 | 3 | Wake Forest | D4b-22 | D4b-GB-22 |
| 63 | Walker, Rasheed | T | 6-6 | 324 | 3 | Penn State | D7c-22 | D7c-GB-22 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 49 | Alexandre, Deslin | DL | 6-3 | 264 | 1 | Pitt | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| 94 | Brooks, Karl | DL | 6-3 | 296 | 2 | Bowling Green | D6a-23 | D6a-GB-23 |
| 97 | Clark, Kenny | DL | 6-3 | 314 | 9 | UCLA | D1-16 | D1-GB-16 |
| 57 | Cox Jr., Brenton | DL | 6-4 | 250 | 2 | Florida | FA-23 | FA-GB-23 |
| 55 | Enagbare, Kingsley | DL | 6-4 | 258 | 3 | South Carolina | D5-22 | D5-GB-22 |
| 65 | Ester, James | DL | 6-3 | 289 | 1 | Northern Illinois | FA-24 | FA-GB-24 |
| 52 | Gary, Rashan | DL | 6-5 | 277 | 6 | Michigan | D1a-19 | D1a-GB-19 |
| 51 | Martin, Jeremiah | DL | 6-3 | 265 | 1 | Washington | FA-24 | FA-Cle-23 |
| 53 | Mosby, Arron | DL | 6-3 | 250 | 2 | Fresno State | W-Car-23 | FA-Car-22 |
| 60 | Randolph, Keith | DL | 6-4 | 296 | 1 | Illinois | FA-25 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 69 | Silvera, Nesta Jade | DL | 6-2 | 315 | 2 | Arizona State | FA-25 | D7-LV-23 |
| 90 | Van Ness, Lukas | DL | 6-5 | 272 | 2 | Iowa | D1-23 | D1-GB-23 |
| 96 | Wooden, Colby | DL | 6-4 | 273 | 2 | Auburn | D4-23 | D4-GB-23 |
| 95 | Wyatt, Devonte | DL | 6-3 | 304 | 3 | Georgia | D1b-22 | D1b-GB-22 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56 | Cooper, Edgerrin | LB | 6-2 | 229 | 1 | Texas A&M | D2a-24 | D2a-GB-24 |
| 59 | Hopper, Ty'Ron | LB | 6-2 | 228 | 1 | Missouri | D3b-24 | D3b-GB-24 |
| 58 | McDuffie, Isaiah | LB | 6-1 | 227 | 4 | Boston College | D6b-21 | D6b-GB-21 |
| 28 | Simmons, Isaiah | LB | 6-4 | 238 | 5 | Clemson | FA-NYG-25 | D1-Ari-20 |
| 7 | Walker, Quay | LB | 6-4 | 241 | 3 | Georgia | D1a-22 | D1a-GB-22 |
| 54 | Welch, Kristian | LB | 6-3 | 240 | 5 | Iowa | FA-Bal-25 | FA-Bal-20 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | Alexander, Jaire | CB | 5-10 | 196 | 7 | Louisville | D1-18 | D1-GB-18 |
| 39 | Anderson, Zayne | S | 6-2 | 206 | 2 | BYU | W-Buf-23 | FA-KC-21 |
| 40 | Brown, Omar | S | 6-1 | 205 | 1 | Nebraska | FA-24 | FA-Den-24 |
| 20 | Bullard, Javon | S | 5-10 | 198 | 1 | Georgia | D2b-24 | D2b-GB-24 |
| 47 | Dunn, Isaiah | CB | 6-0 | 189 | 2 | Oregon State | FA-25 | FA-NYJ-21 |
| 36 | Hadden, Kamal | CB | 6-1 | 192 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-24 | D6-KC-24 |
| 41 | Hayes, Kaleb | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 1 | BYU | FA-25 | FA-Jac-23 |
| 21 | Hobbs, Nate | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 4 | Illinois | FA-LV-25 | D5-LV-21 |
| 34 | King, Kalen | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Penn State | D7b-24 | D7b-GB-24 |
| 29 | McKinney, Xavier | S | 6-0 | 201 | 5 | Alabama | FA-NYG-24 | D2-NYG-20 |
| 25 | Nixon, Keisean | CB | 5-10 | 200 | 6 | South Carolina | FA-LV-22 | FA-LV-19 |
| 27 | Oladapo, Kitan | S | 6-2 | 216 | 1 | Oregon State | D5b-24 | D5b-GB-24 |
| 24 | Valentine, Carrington | CB | 6-0 | 189 | 2 | Kentucky | D7a-23 | D7a-GB-23 |
| 33 | Williams, Evan | S | 5-11 | 200 | 1 | Oregon | D4-24 | D4-GB-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Hale, Alex | K | 6-1 | 203 | 1 | Oklahoma State | FA-24 | FA-GB-24 |
| 17 | McManus, Brandon | K | 6-3 | 201 | 11 | Temple | FA-24 | FA-Ind-13 |
| 42 | Orzech, Matt | LS | 6-3 | 245 | 5 | Azusa Pacific | FA-LAR-23 | FA-Bal-19 |
| 19 | Whelan, Daniel | P | 6-5 | 216 | 2 | UC Davis | FA-23 | FA-NO-22 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 11 | Jayden Reed | 13 | Dontayvion Wicks |
| WR | 87 | Romeo Doubs | 80 | Bo Melton |
| WR | 22 | Matthew Golden (R) | 9 | Christian Watson |
| LT | 63 | Rasheed Walker | 77 | Jordan Morgan |
| LG | 65 | Aaron Banks | 79 | Travis Glover |
| C | 74 | Elgton Jenkins | 62 | Jacob Monk |
| RG | 75 | Sean Rhyan | 67 | Donovan Jennings |
| RT | 50 | Zach Tom | 71 | Anthony Belton (R) |
| TE | 85 | Tucker Kraft | 88 | Luke Musgrave |
| QB | 10 | Jordan Love | 2 | Malik Willis |
| RB | 8 | Josh Jacobs | 32 | MarShawn Lloyd |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 52 | Rashan Gary | 90 | Lukas Van Ness |
| NT | 97 | Kenny Clark | 96 | Colby Wooden |
| DT | 95 | Devonte Wyatt | 94 | Karl Brooks |
| DE | 55 | Kingsley Enagbare | 99 | Barryn Sorrell (R) |
| SLB | 58 | Isaiah McDuffie | 54 | Kristian Welch |
| MLB | 56 | Edgerrin Cooper | 59 | Ty'Ron Hopper |
| WLB | 7 | Quay Walker | 28 | Isaiah Simmons |
| CB | 21 | Nate Hobbs | 24 | Carrington Valentin |
| CB | 25 | Keisean Nixon | 34 | Kalen King |
| SS | 33 | Evan Williams | 20 | Javon Bullard |
| FS | 29 | Xavier McKinney | 27 | Kitan Oladapo |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 17 | Brandon McManus | KR | 25 | Keisean Nixon |
| P | 19 | Daniel Whelan | PR | 25 | Keisean Nixon |

**14.4%**

Jordan Love targeted deep receivers on 14.4% of his passes last year per NFL Next Gen Stats, the second-highest rate in the NFL.

## PACKERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Matthew Golden | WR | 5-11 | 191 | Texas |
| 2 | Anthony Belton | OT | 6-6 | 335 | NC State |
| 3 | Savion Williams | WR | 6-4 | 222 | TCU |
| 4 | Barryn Sorrell | Edge | 6-3 | 256 | Texas |
| 5 | Collin Oliver | DE | 6-2 | 240 | Oklahoma State |
| 6 | Warren Brinson | DT | 6-5 | 315 | Georgia |
| 7 | Micah Robinson | CB | 5-11 | 185 | Tulane |
| 7 | John Williams | G | 6-4 | 322 | Cincinnati |

Apparently, all it took for the Packers to end their 23-year streak of not selecting a wide receiver in the first round was hosting the NFL Draft in Green Bay. Now, the Packers must hope Matthew Golden exceeds the production of 2002 first-rounder Javon Walker (one 1,000-yard season, one Pro Bowl selection). Anthony Belton might not play right away but looks like the latest college left tackle to convert to guard in Green Bay. Barryn Sorrell, Collin Oliver and Warren Brinson bring much-needed depth to the defensive line, while Micah Robinson's selection marks the third year in a row general manager Brian Gutekunst has taken a seventh-round flyer on a cornerback. Had the board fallen differently in the third round, the Packers might've gone corner earlier. Instead, Robinson is a sleeper pick to chip in right away.

# VIKINGS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 8 | at Chicago | 8:15 |
| Sept. 14 | Atlanta | 8:20 |
| Sept. 21 | Cincinnati | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Pittsburgh (Dublin) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 5 | Cleveland (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 12 | BYE | |
| Oct. 19 | Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Oct. 23 | at L.A. Chargers | 8:15 |
| Nov. 2 | at Detroit | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | Chicago | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | at Seattle | 4:05 |
| Dec. 7 | Washington | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | at Dallas | 8:20 |
| Dec. 21 | at N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Dec. 25 | Detroit | 4:30 |
| TBD | Green Bay | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 7 |
| 2021 | 8 |
| 2022 NFC PLAYOFFS | 13 |
| 2023 | 7 |
| 2024 NFC PLAYOFFS | 14 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Kevin O'Connell
**Record With Team:** 34-17
**Career Record:** 34-17
**Offensive Coordinator:** Wes Phillips
**Defensive Coordinator:** Brian Flores
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Matt Daniels
**Quarterbacks:** Josh McCown
**Running Game Coordinator/Running Backs:** Curtis Modkins
**Wide Receivers:** Keenan McCardell
**Passing Game Coordinator/Tight Ends:** Brian Angelichio
**Offensive Line:** Chris Kuper
**Defensive Line:** Marcus Dixon
**Assistant Head Coach/Outside Linebackers:** Mike Pettine
**Inside Linebackers:** Mike Siravo
**Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs:** Daronte Jones
**Safeties:** Michael Hutchings

NFC NORTH FORECAST

3

Kevin O'Connell's vision for the 2025 offseason began moments after the Los Angeles Rams thumped the Vikings with an NFL playoff record-tying nine sacks in a 27-9 wild-card rout, which came eight days after a 31-9 beatdown at Detroit cost Minnesota the NFC North title and the NFC's No. 1 seed.

Still happy that his team won 14 games with Sam Darnold at quarterback — a feat that was unfathomable to nearly everyone but the NFL Coach of the Year winner — O'Connell was, however, more focused on the four losses, two each to the Lions and the Rams, that exposed the Vikings as soft pretenders, not Super Bowl contenders. Asked where he ranked improving the offensive line on the Vikings' to-do list, O'Connell was firm and direct, saying, "We got to find a way to solidify the interior of the pocket, first and foremost."

O'Connell had preached all season about wanting a different "play style" — one that was tougher, more powerful, more capable of beating Dan Campbell's division bullies in Detroit. While the team made strides, ultimately the Vikings lacked the personnel in the trenches to really pull it off.

Freed from the burdens of a giant quarterback contract, the Vikings went on a $300 million free-agent spending spree that greatly increased quarterback J.J. McCarthy's chances of succeeding in Year 1 as an NFL starter after missing all of last season with a knee injury. Among other things, the Vikings reshaped both lines of scrimmage with right guard Will Fries, the top guard available ($88 million), center Ryan Kelly and big-name defensive tackles Jonathan Allen and Javon Hargrave. The Vikings then made Ohio State left guard Donovan Jackson the first guard Minnesota drafted in the first round since since Hall of Famer Randall McDaniel in 1988.

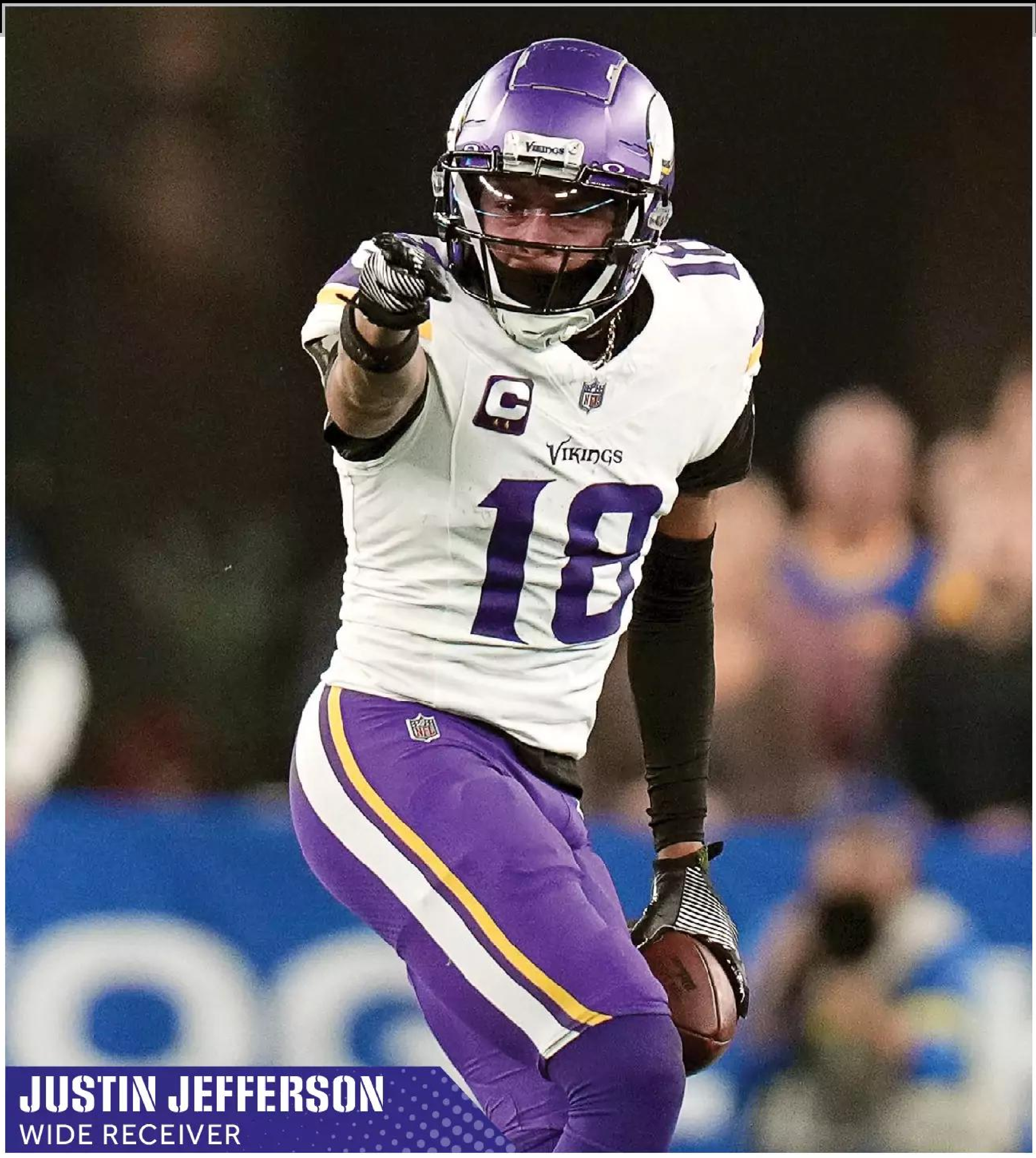
"To win four playoff games [including the Super Bowl], you'll get into different types of fights," says general manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah. "You want to have the type of roster to win any type of game."

## OFFENSE

Better pass protection isn't the only reason the Vikings changed all three interior line starters. O'Connell has had one of the NFL's worst rushing attacks, ranking 24th or worse in yards per carry in each of the past three years. Kelly and Fries — a top-five guard in the league — helped make the Colts a top-eight rushing team last year. Jackson, meanwhile, has ready-made NFL strength and will be a Day 1 starter ahead of Blake Brandel, who becomes a versatile backup. Left tackle Christian Darrisaw, who's expected back in Week 1 from ACL surgery, and right tackle Brian O'Neill are elite. "Great offensive lines are team lifters," Adofo-Mensah says of the team's offseason focus. "They establish a play style, a demeanor, that we want to be about."

O'Connell, the "quarterback whisperer," hand-picked McCarthy 10th overall in the 2024 draft. A national champion at Michigan, McCarthy led the FBS in completion percentage (72.3%) his last year. Justin Jefferson is arguably the best receiver in football and on a Hall of Fame trajectory. Jordan Addison would be a No. 1 receiver on most teams, while veteran Jalen Nailor and third-round pick Tai Felton bring top-shelf speed at wideout. T.J. Hockenson is among the best tight ends in football and is further removed from the ACL surgery that cost him the first seven games a year ago.

Running back Aaron Jones Sr., an excellent dual threat with deceptive power, is 30, but he won't be overloaded like he was when he started breaking down late



**JUSTIN JEFFERSON**
WIDE RECEIVER

JOSEPH RONDONE/THE REPUBLIC

last year. That's because an outstanding trade brought 26-year-old Jordan Mason from the 49ers for a 2026 sixth-round pick. Mason is a bigger back (5-11, 223 vs. 5-10, 208 for Jones) with fresher legs (236 career carries in three years) to lighten the workload behind a line that should make everyone better.

## DEFENSE

Coordinator Brian Flores enters Year 3 with the Vikings as one of the NFL's most creative defensive visionaries and aggressive play-callers with a league-high blitz percentage of 38.9% last year. A year after his personnel input led to edge rushers Andrew Van Ginkel and Jonathan Greenard combining for 23.5 sacks, the Vikings hit free agency again to upgrade the front of Flores' 3-4 scheme with Allen and Hargrave. They're over 30 and coming off injuries but are worth the risk as two of the best interior rushers of their generation with a combined 87.5 sacks and 197 QB hits in 239 games.

The secondary has lost three of the top six defensive backs Flores used last year. Flores' back-end cupboard isn't entirely bare, though. Byron Murphy Jr., a 27-year-old All-Pro in waiting, is coming off a career year in every facet, from tackles (81) to interceptions (six). Safety Harrison Smith, 36, basically is a player-coach with ample gas left in Year 14. Theo Jackson, a reliable backup the past three years, will see more time alongside Smith and do-it-all weapon Joshua Metellus in Flores' three-safety looks. Cornerback Isaiah Rodgers, a former Philadelphia Eagle, was an offseason priority signing for Flores. Rodgers will start opposite Murphy, while Mekhi Blackmon will be the leading candidate at the No. 3 corner after missing all of last season with a torn ACL. Other new faces to keep an eye on include cornerback Jeff Okudah, the third overall pick in the 2020 draft by Detroit, as a great risk-reward signing; Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins, a fifth-round rookie tackle from Georgia, as a rotational standout behind the older vets; and fellow fifth-rounder Kobe King, an inside linebacker who can back up Ivan Pace Jr. and Blake Cashman while having some of the position-flexible skills that have served Metellus so well in Flores' schemes.

## SPECIALISTS

Second-year placekicker Will Reichard, an ice-cold 24, has stabilized the kicker position. Three of his six misses as a rookie came while he was dealing with an injury. He also has a big leg, making 8-of-11 from 50-plus yards. Punter Ryan Wright was outstanding as a rookie in 2022, almost lost his job in 2023 and rebounded in 2024 well enough to help the Vikings rank fourth in punt coverage. He'll be on a short leash in camp.

The return units have been awful in recent years, ranking last on punts and 31st on kickoffs last season. There will be competition at both return spots. Free-agent acquisition Rondale Moore will headline a list of punt return challengers to replace former Viking Brandon Powell, who offered little the last two years. Felton will lead the kick returners competing to replace Ty Chandler, who had no juice in the role.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

McCarthy has all he needs to succeed, much like Jayden Daniels did in leading the Washington Commanders to the NFC title game a year ago. O'Connell is among the best in the league at handling quarterbacks and play-calling. The skill positions are elite. And an offseason dedicated to fostering physicality up front should help the team seize control of more games.

But each season is different. While McCarthy may prove to be a better quarterback than Darnold in the long run, he'll also need a season of on-the-job training in what essentially is his rookie year. A tougher schedule also awaits as the Vikings go from playing the AFC South and the New York Jets at a neutral site a year ago (5-0) to facing the rugged AFC North and the 2024 playoff-qualifying Chargers in Los Angeles this year. Look for the Vikings to win nine, maybe 10 games and contend for a wild-card spot while needing another year to overtake Detroit in the division.

## 2024 RESULTS (14-3)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 28-6 |
| Sept. | 15 | San Francisco | W | 23-17 |
| Sept. | 22 | Houston | W | 34-7 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Green Bay | W | 31-29 |
| Oct. | 6 | N.Y. Jets | W | 23-17 |
| Oct. | 20 | Detroit | L | 29-31 |
| Oct. | 24 | at L.A. Rams | L | 20-30 |
| Nov. | 3 | Indianapolis | W | 21-13 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Jacksonville | W | 12-7 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Tennessee | W | 23-13 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Chicago (ot) | W | 30-27 |
| Dec. | 1 | Arizona | W | 23-22 |
| Dec. | 8 | Atlanta | W | 42-21 |
| Dec. | 16 | Chicago | W | 30-12 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Seattle | W | 27-24 |
| Dec. | 29 | Green Bay | W | 27-25 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Detroit | L | 9-31 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 13 | at L.A. Rams | L | 9-27 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 346.9 | 12 | 9 |
| Rushing | 109.1 | T19 | 11 |
| Passing | 237.8 | 6 | 5 |
| Scoring | 25.4 | 9 | 6 |
| Third Down % | 40.0 | 12 | 7 |
| Points/Play | 0.392 | 10 | 6 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 335.4 | 16 | 6 |
| Rushing | 93.4 | 2 | 1 |
| Passing | 242.0 | 28 | 14 |
| Scoring | 19.5 | 5 | 2 |
| Interceptions | 24 | 1 | 1 |
| Sacks | 49 | T4 | 2 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.318 | 4 | 2 |
| TO Differential | +12 | T3 | T1 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sam Darnold | 545 | 361 | 4,319 | 35 | 12 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aaron Jones Sr. | 255 | 1,138 | 4.5 | 5 |
| Cam Akers | 64 | 297 | 4.6 | 1 |
| Sam Darnold | 67 | 212 | 3.2 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Justin Jefferson | 103 | 1,533 | 14.9 | 10 |
| Jordan Addison | 63 | 875 | 13.9 | 9 |
| Aaron Jones Sr. | 51 | 408 | 8.0 | 2 |
| T.J. Hockenson | 41 | 455 | 11.1 | 0 |
| Jalen Nailor | 28 | 414 | 14.8 | 6 |
| Josh Oliver | 22 | 258 | 11.7 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Will Reichard, 24-30 FGs, 38-38 PATs, 110 points
**TACKLES:** Blake Cashman, 112; Josh Metellus, 103
**SACKS:** Jonathan Greenard, 12.0; Andrew Van Ginkel, 11.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Byron Murphy Jr., 6; 2 players tied with 3

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**McCARTHY'S SUPERPOWER** Quarterback **J.J. McCarthy** talked this spring about how being diagnosed with ADHD as a kid made him feel like he had "a superpower." "People with ADHD, they find calm in the chaos and chaos in the calm," he said. "I've always felt, ever since I was a kid, just any competitive environment I was in, I felt like I was at home. Playing at Michigan, there's 110,000 [people], and you're at one of the most prominent universities out there. That's where I feel most comfortable, is when the lights are the brightest, the stage is the biggest stage out there. And I know it's going to be a lot more of that to come."

BRAD REMPEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

**TEAM FIRST** Ohio State needed Donovan Jackson to move to left tackle when Josh Simmons was injured five games into last season. Jackson's first assignment days later would be containing Penn State's Abdul Carter. "You know, at the end of the day, I just wanted to help the team win more than anything else," Jackson says. "It doesn't matter what my goals are, as long as the team wins." It was Jackson's work against Carter that convinced Vikings general manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah that Jackson was "the kind of athlete I really believed was under the hood." The Vikings picked Jackson 24th overall — eight spots ahead of where the Kansas City Chiefs selected Simmons.

**BATTLING CHILD HOMELESSNESS** Defensive tackle Jonathan Allen works with the Sasha Bruce Youthwork, a Washington, D.C.-area nonprofit that helps kids experiencing homelessness. "Kids going through that trauma need to know — should know — that people are in their corner," says Allen, who came through the foster care system himself.

# SCOUTING THE VIKINGS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MINNESOTA

"This is the year the Vikings find out if J.J. McCarthy is their franchise quarterback. Lot to like about intangibles and big-game performances at the college level; gotta see it at this level and how fast can he process. Excited to watch him develop. … Throwing to Justin Jefferson, who's to me the best all-around receiver in the game, should give J.J. a real leg up. … Having back Christian Darrisaw at left tackle is a difference-maker. … Rookie left guard Donovan Jackson is ready to play right away. He showed a lot of flexibility and maturity at Ohio State — highest grade point average, team captain, All-American. … Aaron Jones Sr. defines the phrase 'downhill runner.' You don't want to get in his way. He'll run you over. … Acquiring Jonathan Allen is a big-time add to the defensive line. … Javon Hargrave is expected to bounce back from injuries he dealt with the last few seasons. When he's healthy, he's hard to block. … Jonathan Greenard proved his point last season, making the Pro Bowl as an edge rusher when the Texans declined to make him a market-value offer. … The Vikings love what they've seen from Blake Cashman as an off-the-ball linebacker. Cashman is ultra-local. He grew up in Lake Minnetonka and went to the University of Minnesota. … Andrew Van Ginkel thrived in Brian Flores' scheme and earned a raise. … Harrison Smith seems to have found the fountain of youth. He takes great care of himself and always answers the bell. … Byron Murphy Jr. is a quality nickel. … Isaiah Rodgers parlayed his second chance in Philly into a nice contract with the Vikings."

## 2025 VIKINGS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 Howell, Sam | QB | 6-1 | 225 | 3 | North Carolina | T-Sea-25 | D5a-Was-22 |
| 9 McCarthy, J.J. | QB | 6-3 | 219 | 1 | Michigan | D1a-24 | D1a-Min-24 |
| 19 Rypien, Brett | QB | 6-2 | 210 | 6 | Boise State | FA-24 | FA-Den-19 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32 Chandler, Ty | RB | 5-11 | 204 | 3 | North Carolina | D5b-22 | D5b-Min-22 |
| 37 Gaskin, Myles | RB | 5-9 | 199 | 6 | Washington | FA-23 | D7-Mia-19 |
| 30 Ham, C.J. | FB | 5-11 | 250 | 8 | Augustana | FA-16 | FA-Min-16 |
| 33 Jones Sr., Aaron | RB | 5-10 | 208 | 8 | UTEP | FA-GB-24 | D5b-GB-17 |
| 27 Mason, Jordan | RB | 5-11 | 223 | 3 | Georgia Tech | T-SF-25 | FA-SF-22 |
| 36 Scott, Zavier | RB | 6-1 | 219 | 1 | Maine | FA-24 | FA-Ind-23 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Addison, Jordan | WR | 5-11 | 175 | 2 | USC | D1-23 | D1-Min-23 |
| 87 Hockenson, T.J. | TE | 6-5 | 248 | 6 | Iowa | T-Det-22 | D1-Det-19 |
| 81 Jackson, Lucky | WR | 6-0 | 186 | 2 | WKU | FA-23 | FA-Min-23 |
| 18 Jefferson, Justin | WR | 6-1 | 195 | 5 | LSU | D1a-20 | D1a-Min-20 |
| 82 Jones, Jeshaun | WR | 6-1 | 188 | 1 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 14 Jones, Tim | WR | 6-1 | 200 | 4 | Southern Miss | FA-Jac-25 | FA-Jac-21 |
| 4 Moore, Rondale | WR | 5-7 | 181 | 4 | Purdue | FA-Atl-25 | D2-Ari-21 |
| 1 Nailor, Jalen | WR | 5-11 | 190 | 3 | Michigan State | D6b-22 | D6b-Min-22 |
| 84 Oliver, Josh | TE | 6-5 | 259 | 6 | San José State | FA-Bal-23 | D3-Jac-19 |
| 89 Thomas, Thayer | WR | 6-0 | 195 | 1 | NC State | FA-23 | FA-Min-23 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 64 Brandel, Blake | G | 6-6 | 315 | 4 | Oregon State | D6a-20 | D6a-Min-20 |
| 68 Byrd, Henry | G | 6-5 | 310 | 1 | Princeton | FA-23 | FA-Min-23 |
| 71 Darrisaw, Christian | T | 6-5 | 315 | 4 | Virginia Tech | D1-21 | D1-Min-21 |
| 63 Flax, Jeremy | T | 6-5 | 343 | 1 | Kentucky | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 76 Fries, Will | G | 6-6 | 305 | 4 | Penn State | FA-Ind-25 | D7-Ind-21 |
| 72 Johnson, Marcellus | T | 6-4 | 307 | 1 | Missouri | FA-25 | FA-NYG-24 |
| 65 Jurgens, Michael | G | 6-5 | 311 | 1 | Wake Forest | D7a-24 | D7a-Min-24 |
| 78 Kelly, Ryan | C | 6-4 | 307 | 9 | Alabama | FA-Ind-25 | D1-Ind-16 |
| 75 O'Neill, Brian | T | 6-7 | 310 | 7 | Pitt | D2-18 | D2-Min-18 |
| 79 Robinson, Tyrese | G | 6-3 | 317 | 2 | Oklahoma | FA-23 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 73 Rouse, Walter | T | 6-6 | 313 | 1 | Oklahoma | D6a-24 | D6a-Min-24 |
| 67 Skule, Justin | T | 6-6 | 315 | 5 | Vanderbilt | FA-TB-25 | D6b-SF-19 |
| 72 Watson IV, Leroy | T | 6-5 | 310 | 1 | UTSA | FA-24 | FA-Atl-22 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 93 Allen, Jonathan | DT | 6-3 | 300 | 8 | Alabama | FA-Was-25 | D1-Was-17 |
| 95 Bell, Travis | DT | 6-1 | 305 | 1 | Kennesaw State | FA-24 | D7-Chi-23 |
| 98 Hargrave, Javon | DL | 6-2 | 305 | 9 | South Carolina St. | FA-SF-25 | D3-Pit-16 |
| 92 Harris, Jonathan | DT | 6-5 | 295 | 4 | Lindenwood | FA-24 | FA-Chi-19 |
| 97 Phillips, Harrison | DL | 6-3 | 307 | 7 | Stanford | FA-Buf-22 | D3-Buf-18 |
| 61 Redmond, Jalen | DL | 6-3 | 291 | 1 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-Car-23 |
| 50 Rodriguez, Levi Drake | DL | 6-2 | 290 | 1 | TAMU Commerce | D7b-24 | D7b-Min-24 |
| 94 Taimani, Taki | DL | 6-1 | 309 | 1 | Oregon | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 Asamoah II, Brian | LB | 6-0 | 226 | 3 | Oklahoma | D3-22 | D3-Min-22 |
| 51 Cashman, Blake | LB | 6-1 | 235 | 6 | Minnesota | FA-Hou-24 | D5-NYJ-19 |
| 40 Gant, Dallas | LB | 6-2 | 224 | 1 | Toledo | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 58 Greenard, Jonathan | OLB | 6-3 | 259 | 5 | Florida | FA-Hou-24 | D3-Hou-20 |
| 45 Kunaszyk, Jordan | LB | 6-3 | 235 | 6 | Cal | FA-24 | FA-Car-19 |
| 59 Murphy, Gabriel | OLB | 6-2 | 247 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 0 Pace Jr., Ivan | LB | 5-10 | 231 | 2 | Cincinnati | FA-23 | FA-Min-23 |
| 98 Richter, Bo | OLB | 6-1 | 248 | 1 | Air Force | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 45 Tooley, Max | LB | 6-2 | 225 | 1 | BYU | FA-24 | FA-Hou-24 |
| 15 Turner, Dallas | OLB | 6-3 | 247 | 1 | Alabama | D1b-24 | D1b-Min-24 |
| 43 Van Ginkel, Andrew | OLB | 6-4 | 242 | 6 | Wisconsin | FA-Mia-24 | D5-Mia-19 |
| 55 Wilson, Eric | LB | 6-1 | 230 | 8 | Cincinnati | FA-GB-25 | FA-Min-17 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 Blackmon, Mekhi | CB | 5-11 | 178 | 2 | USC | D3b-23 | D3b-Min-23 |
| 39 Bolden, Bubba | S | 6-2 | 200 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-25 | FA-Sea-22 |
| 21 Evans, Akayleb | CB | 6-2 | 198 | 3 | Missouri | D4-22 | D4-Min-22 |
| 26 Jackson, Theo | S | 6-1 | 198 | 3 | Tennessee | FA-22 | D6-Ten-22 |
| 29 McGlothern, Dwight | CB | 6-2 | 185 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-24 | FA-Min-24 |
| 44 Metellus, Joshua | S | 5-11 | 207 | 5 | Michigan | D6b-20 | D6b-Min-20 |
| 7 Murphy Jr., Byron | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 6 | Washington | FA-Ari-23 | D2a-Ari-19 |
| 21 Okudah, Jeff | CB | 6-1 | 205 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-Hou-25 | D1-Det-20 |
| 2 Rodgers, Isaiah | CB | 5-10 | 176 | 4 | UMass | FA-Phi-25 | D6-Ind-20 |
| 22 Smith, Harrison | S | 6-2 | 211 | 13 | Notre Dame | D1b-12 | D1b-Min-12 |
| 20 Steward, Reddy | DB | 5-11 | 178 | 1 | Troy | FA-25 | FA-Chi-24 |
| 23 Thomas, Ambry | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 4 | Michigan | FA-24 | D3b-SF-21 |
| 37 Thomas, Tavierre | CB | 5-10 | 205 | 7 | Ferris State | FA-TB-25 | FA-Ari-18 |
| 24 Ward, Jay | S | 6-1 | 188 | 2 | LSU | D4-23 | D4-Min-23 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 DePaola, Andrew | LS | 6-1 | 229 | 10 | Rutgers | FA-20 | FA-TB-12 |
| 16 Reichard, Will | K | 6-1 | 187 | 1 | Alabama | D6b-24 | D6b-Min-24 |
| 17 Wright, Ryan | P | 6-3 | 245 | 3 | Tulane | FA-22 | FA-Min-22 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 18 | Justin Jefferson | 1 | Jalen Nailor |
| WR | 3 | Jordan Addison | 13 | Tai Felton (R) |
| LT | 71 | Christian Darrisaw | 73 | Walter Rouse |
| LG | 74 | Donovan Jackson (R) | 64 | Blake Brandel |
| C | 78 | Ryan Kelly | 65 | Michael Jurgens |
| RG | 76 | Will Fries | 68 | Henry Byrd |
| RT | 75 | Brian O'Neill | 67 | Justin Skule |
| TE | 87 | T.J. Hockenson | 84 | Josh Oliver |
| QB | 9 | J.J. McCarthy | 8 | Sam Howell |
| RB | 33 | Aaron Jones Sr. | 27 | Jordan Mason |
| FB | 30 | C.J. Ham | | |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DT | 93 | Jonathan Allen | 61 | Jalen Redmond |
| NT | 97 | Harrison Phillips | 94 | Taki Taimani |
| DT | 98 | Javon Hargrave | 50 | Levi Drake Rodriguez |
| OLB | 58 | Jonathan Greenard | 90 | Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins (R) |
| ILB | 0 | Ivan Pace Jr. | 55 | Eric Wilson |
| ILB | 51 | Blake Cashman | 6 | Brian Asamoah II |
| OLB | 43 | Andrew Van Ginkel | 15 | Dallas Turner |
| CB | 7 | Byron Murphy Jr. | 5 | Mekhi Blackmon |
| CB | 2 | Isaiah Rodgers | 21 | Jeff Okudah |
| SS | 44 | Joshua Metellus | 24 | Jay Ward |
| FS | 22 | Harrison Smith | 26 | Theo Jackson |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | 17 | Ryan Wright | KR | 13 | Tai Felton (R) |
| K | 16 | Will Reichard | PR | 4 | Rondale Moore |

**24**

The Vikings picked off a league-high 24 passes in 2024, five more than the second-place Texans.

## VIKINGS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Donovan Jackson | G | 6-4 | 315 | Ohio State |
| 3 | Tai Felton | WR | 6-1 | 183 | Maryland |
| 5 | Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins | DL | 6-5 | 276 | Georgia |
| 6 | Kobe King | LB | 6-1 | 236 | Penn State |
| 6 | Gavin Bartholomew | TE | 6-5 | 246 | Pitt |

This group ties the smallest draft class in team history, but the Vikings landed one starter (guard Donovan Jackson), much-needed youth for their defensive tackle rotation (Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins), a 4.37 receiver with return skills (Tai Felton), another versatile linebacker/safety type for defensive coordinator Brian Flores' creative schemes (Kobe King) and a replacement for underrated No. 3 tight end Johnny Mundt (Gavin Bartholomew). They also started the draft with four picks but made three trades that netted them an extra pick and veteran backup quarterback Sam Howell from Seattle.

# FALCONS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
2

The Atlanta Falcons will enter the Michael Penix Jr. era in 2025, and expectations are high for the 2024 first-round pick's ascent to the starting quarterback role in Flowery Branch. Second-year head coach Raheem Morris and fifth-year general manager Terry Fontenot both voice glowing confidence in their second-year man, as his three starts last season showed the kind of quarterback play Atlanta has searched for since trading Matt Ryan in 2022.

However, the pressure is on for this Falcons regime to break a seven-season playoff drought and prove that Penix is the right guy to lead the franchise. If this team flounders in 2025, the results could be catastrophic for Morris and Fontenot as far as job security. If the team soars, Atlanta may win the NFC South and position itself as a meaningful contender for years to come. No pressure, right? In Penix they trust, and with Penix this team will sink or swim in 2025.

## OFFENSE

Quarterback Kirk Cousins built momentum as the 2024 season went on, only to falter in November and eventually be yanked from the lineup for Penix. The 2024 first-rounder out of Washington will assume starting duties for a Falcons offense that looked much more lively and prolific with him behind center. Penix went 1-2 as a starter, but his two losses came in overtime when his team didn't get the ball. While his game is still a work in progress, he flashed brilliance and exuded poise in his three starts. Overall, he threw for 775 yards with three touchdowns and three picks, though all of those turnovers arguably had much more to do with the receivers than the decisions Penix made. His floor is a solid starter, and his ceiling is top-10 quarterback. He showed both in his debut season.

Penix should allow Atlanta to run more play-action. Even if he isn't a natural runner, he possesses much more situational mobility than Cousins. Penix can also make every throw on the field, and his aggressive rocket of an arm should make him a fan favorite immediately. Even though growing pains are to be expected, he's already one of the most gifted pure passers in the NFL. His accuracy looked fairly improved, and he was able to attack the middle of the field much more than was schemed for him during his college days.

Penix won't have to do it alone. Running back Bijan Robinson rushed for a whopping 1,456 yards and 14 touchdowns last season. Robinson and Tyler Allgeier (644 yards, three TDs in 2024) might comprise the most lethal running back duo in the NFL outside of the Detroit Lions.

The wide receiver room once again features the electric Drake London, whose 1,271-yard, nine-touchdown 2024 season suggests he'll be one of the most productive receivers in the NFL this year. His three-game connection with Penix was absolutely sensational. Darnell Mooney proved himself to be a free-agent steal with 992 receiving yards and five touchdowns last fall, while Ray-Ray McCloud III outperformed expectations with 686 yards and a touchdown. KhaDarel Hodge should man the fourth wideout spot, while 2024 draft pick Casey Washington, 2025 undrafted free agent Nick Nash and return specialist Jamal Agnew should battle it out for roster spots. Kyle Pitts, Charlie Woerner and free-agent acquisition Feleipe Franks are the top candidates at tight end.

On the offensive line, left tackle Jake Matthews, left guard Matthew Bergeron, right guard Chris Lindstrom and right tackle Kaleb McGary will all return to their starting posts. With center Drew Dalman leaving for the Chicago Bears, part-time 2024 starter Ryan Neuzil should assume that role.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Minnesota | 8:20 |
| Sept. 21 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Washington | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | BYE | |
| Oct. 13 | Buffalo | 7:15 |
| Oct. 19 | at San Francisco | 8:20 |
| Oct. 26 | Miami | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | Indianapolis (Berlin) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Nov. 16 | Carolina | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at New Orleans | 4:25 |
| Nov. 30 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | Seattle | 1:00 |
| Dec. 11 | at Tampa Bay | 8:15 |
| Dec. 21 | at Arizona | 4:05 |
| Dec. 29 | L.A. Rams | 8:15 |
| TBD | New Orleans | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 4 |
| 2021 | 7 |
| 2022 | 7 |
| 2023 | 7 |
| 2024 | 8 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Raheem Morris
**Record With Team:** 12-16
**Career Record:** 29-47
**Offensive Coordinator:** Zac Robinson
**Defensive Coordinator:** Jeff Ulbrich
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Marquice Williams
**Quarterbacks:** D.J. Williams
**Running Backs:** Michael Pitre
**Wide Receivers:** Ike Hilliard
**Tight Ends:** Kevin Koger
**Passing Game Coordinator:** T.J. Yates
**Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line:** Dwayne Ledford
**Assistant Head Coach/Defense:** Jerry Gray
**Defensive Line:** Nate Ollie
**Inside Linebackers:** Barrett Ruud
**Outside Linebackers:** Jacquies Smith
**Secondary:** Justin Hood
**Defensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Mike Rutenberg

**BIJAN ROBINSON**
RUNNING BACK

DALE ZANINE-IMAGN IMAGES

## DEFENSE

The Falcons' defense has undergone a major renovation with new defensive coordinator Jeff Ulbrich overseeing operations. Atlanta's biggest loss of the offseason was longtime defensive tackle Grady Jarrett, who quickly signed with the Bears after the Falcons released him in March. Jarrett was the leader of the Falcons defense and its most senior member. Also gone are two splashy 2024 veteran additions, outside linebacker Matthew Judon and safety Justin Simmons. Both players had their moments, but neither quite performed to expectations.

The team has brought in plenty of help for its lethargic pass rush, the marquee additions being former San Francisco 49ers outside linebacker Leonard Floyd and 2025 first-round picks Jalon Walker out of Georgia and James Pearce Jr. out of Tennessee. The team will also get back 2024 third-round pick Bralen Trice, who missed all of his rookie year after tearing his ACL in the preseason. Those four players will join outside linebacker Arnold Ebiketie and blitzing linebacker Kaden Elliss with the goal of transforming Atlanta's edge unit from a longtime weakness to one that constantly gets after the quarterback.

Losing Jarrett was a blow to the defensive tackle room, but veteran David Onyemata looks to rebound from a down 2024. Two 2024 draft picks, Ruke Orhorhoro and Brandon Dorlus, also look poised to take on much bigger roles. Free-agent signee Morgan Fox, a former Los Angeles Charger, has been an effective pass-rusher in his career.

Elliss leads a linebacker group that also features former Las Vegas Raiders linebacker Divine Deablo, 2022 second-round pick Troy Andersen and 2024 fifth-round pick JD Bertrand. Andersen has flashed some outstanding play on the field when healthy, but he's missed substantial time in 2023 and 2024. A healthy Andersen and Deablo living up to his new contract would go a long way in enabling this group bolster the middle of the defense. Walker will start his career as a pass-rusher, but he has experience dropping in coverage and playing off the ball.

The secondary looks very promising, as elite starters in cornerback A.J. Terrell Jr. and safety Jessie Bates III are joined by a pair of 2025 draft picks — Notre Dame safety Xavier Watts and Oklahoma defensive back Billy Bowman Jr. Watts could contend right away for the strong safety spot next to Bates with free-agent acquisition Jordan Fuller and veteran DeMarcco Hellams, while Bowman looks to contend with cornerbacks Dee Alford and Clark Phillips III for the nickelback spot.

Mike Hughes re-signed to be the primary outside corner opposite Terrell after playing well in 2024. Cornerback Mike Ford Jr. rejoins the Falcons as a depth piece and a special teams ace.

## SPECIALISTS

Kicker Younghoe Koo struggled a bit in 2024 and missed time with a hip injury, which explains why the Falcons brought in international kicker Lenny Krieg in March. Those two will likely duke it out in camp, but a healthy Koo can absolutely keep his job. Punter Bradley Pinion and long-snapper Liam McCullough should return to their jobs without any competition. Agnew looks to be the favorite at punt and kickoff returner, which will give him an inside track to a wide receiver spot on the roster.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Falcons are relying on a major youth movement to ascend to the top of the NFC South for the first time since the 2016 season. How all these young players coalesce with the proven veterans on the roster, and how Morris and his staff adapt in 2025, will determine where Atlanta's season goes. Getting Penix settled in as a long-term starter and showing improvement on the defense would be huge wins.

Potential doesn't always turn into production, but if the Falcons can develop their young players, we'll be talking about this football team for years to come. The heat is on either way for Atlanta to start winning games. The future has to start now.

## 2024 RESULTS (8-9)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Pittsburgh | L | 10-18 |
| Sept. | 16 | at Philadelphia | W | 22-21 |
| Sept. | 22 | Kansas City | L | 17-22 |
| Sept. | 29 | New Orleans | W | 26-24 |
| Oct. | 3 | Tampa Bay (ot) | W | 36-30 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Carolina | W | 38-20 |
| Oct. | 20 | Seattle | L | 14-34 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Tampa Bay | W | 31-26 |
| Nov. | 3 | Dallas | W | 27-21 |
| Nov. | 10 | at New Orleans | L | 17-20 |
| Nov. | 17 | at Denver | L | 6-38 |
| Dec. | 1 | L.A. Chargers | L | 13-17 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Minnesota | L | 21-42 |
| Dec. | 16 | at Las Vegas | W | 15-9 |
| Dec. | 22 | N.Y. Giants | W | 34-7 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Washington (ot) | L | 24-30 |
| Jan. | 5 | Carolina (ot) | L | 38-44 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 369.8 | 6 | 5 |
| Rushing | 130.5 | 10 | 7 |
| Passing | 239.3 | 5 | 4 |
| Scoring | 22.9 | T13 | T8 |
| Third Down % | 39.2 | 17 | 9 |
| Points/Play | 0.358 | 18 | 11 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 345.2 | 23 | 10 |
| Rushing | 120.6 | 15 | 6 |
| Passing | 224.5 | 22 | 11 |
| Scoring | 24.9 | 23 | 13 |
| Interceptions | 12 | T17 | 9 |
| Sacks | 31 | 31 | 16 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.396 | 24 | 12 |
| TO Differential | -6 | T23 | T12 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kirk Cousins | 453 | 303 | 3,508 | 18 | 16 |
| Michael Penix Jr. | 105 | 61 | 775 | 3 | 3 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bijan Robinson | 304 | 1,456 | 4.8 | 14 |
| Tyler Allgeier | 137 | 644 | 4.7 | 3 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Drake London | 100 | 1,271 | 12.7 | 9 |
| Darnell Mooney | 64 | 992 | 15.5 | 5 |
| Ray-Ray McCloud | 62 | 686 | 11.1 | 1 |
| Bijan Robinson | 61 | 431 | 7.1 | 1 |
| Kyle Pitts | 47 | 602 | 12.8 | 4 |

**KICKING:** Younghoe Koo, 25-34 FGs, 26-26 PATs, 101 points
**TACKLES:** Kaden Eliss, 151; Jessie Bates III, 102
**SACKS:** Arnold Ebiketie, 6.0; Matthew Judon, 5.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Jessie Bates III, 4; 2 players tied with 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**FINALLY, A BULLDOG!** New Falcons outside linebacker **Jalon Walker** played football at Georgia, and he'll find plenty of Atlanta fans who cheered for him in college. Falcons fans have been clamoring for Atlanta to take a Georgia defender high in the draft for years to no avail, and Walker finally crosses that eternal request off the checklist.

**ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER** With defensive tackle Grady Jarrett being released, tackle Jake Matthews is now the last Falcons player on the roster from the 2016 season that ended in Super Bowl LI's infamous 28-3 collapse. Head coach Raheem Morris and defensive coordinator Jeff Ulbrich were on staff with Atlanta then as well.

**BEST IN SHOW** New Falcons defensive tackle Morgan Fox showcases his French bulldog in professional competitions. His faithful pup Winston earned Reserve Best in Show at the 2022 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. Talk about a doggone good addition for Atlanta this offseason.

**HAPPY TRAILS, JET JONES** Falcons legend Julio Jones retired in the offseason after a brilliant NFL career that started in 2011. He is the best wide receiver in franchise history and perhaps the best wide receiver to play in the NFL during the 2010s. His 2016 season is the stuff of legend. Don't be surprised when he makes it into the Pro Football Hall of Fame as a first-ballot selection.

**THE 'BRICH IS BACK** New defensive coordinator Jeff Ulbrich is no stranger to Atlanta. He worked for the Falcons during the Dan Quinn regime and even assumed interim defensive coordinator duties in 2020 after Quinn was let go. Morris was the interim head coach that season as well. Now, they'll work together again in the jobs they once held in an interim capacity.

# SCOUTING THE FALCONS

## OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ATLANTA

"When the Falcons added Kirk Cousins and Michael Penix Jr. a year ago, they didn't know how it was going to turn out. Cousins' regression as an older quarterback was unexpected. Penix being so NFL-ready was something Atlanta hoped for but couldn't bank on. Although the Cousins contract creates a financial mess for Atlanta, at least they aren't in the unenviable situation of wanting to move on from him and not having a good Plan B. Penix is a legitimate passer with a big upside. … Bijan Robinson is an elite talent. … This is an underrated receiving corps with Darnell Mooney, Drake London and Ray-Ray McCloud III. … Kyle Pitts needs to recapture his rookie form. The Falcons need to get a lot more mileage out of the tight end position. … Jake Matthews, the son of Hall of Fame offensive lineman Bruce Matthews, has manufactured a commendable career. Every year, he shows how far his work ethic, technique and hard-nosed style can take this offense. He's been a cornerstone at left tackle. … Chris Lindstrom is a rock at right guard. That's a strong right side of the line with him and Kaleb McGary. … The defense needs to get better. Adding more edge help with Jalon Walker, James Pearce Jr. and Leonard Floyd should make things more difficult for opposing quarterbacks. The pass rush was awful last season. … Can't say this linebacker group is very inspiring. … The secondary, headlined by A.J. Terrell Jr. and Jessie Bates III, is a competitive group. They have a lot of challenging matchups in the division."

BRETT DAVIS-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 FALCONS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Cousins, Kirk | QB | 6-3 | 205 | 13 | Michigan State | FA-Min-24 | D4a-Was-12 |
| 11 | Jones, Emory | QB | 6-3 | 210 | 1 | Cincinnati | FA-24 | FA-Bal-24 |
| 9 | Penix Jr., Michael | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 1 | Washington | D1-24 | D1-Atl-24 |
| 12 | Stick, Easton | QB | 6-1 | 224 | 6 | North Dakota St. | FA-LAC-25 | D5-LAC-19 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Allgeier, Tyler | RB | 5-10 | 225 | 3 | BYU | D5-22 | D5-Atl-22 |
| 41 | Dotson, Elijah | RB | 5-9 | 202 | 1 | Northern Colorado | FA-24 | FA-LAC-23 |
| 30 | McClellan, Jase | RB | 5-11 | 215 | 1 | Alabama | D6a-24 | D6a-Atl-24 |
| 7 | Robinson, Bijan | RB | 5-11 | 215 | 2 | Texas | D1-23 | D1-Atl-23 |
| 28 | Washington Jr., Carlos | RB | 5-11 | 210 | 1 | SE Louisiana | FA-23 | FA-Atl-23 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Agnew, Jamal | WR | 5-10 | 190 | 8 | San Diego | FA-25 | D5-Det-17 |
| 19 | Blair, Chris | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 1 | Alcorn State | FA-23 | FA-GB-21 |
| 16 | Dorsett II, Phillip | WR | 5-10 | 192 | 10 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-24 | D1-Ind-15 |
| 81 | Drummond, Dylan | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | Eastern Michigan | FA-24 | FA-Det-23 |
| 15 | Franks, Feleipe | TE | 6-6 | 241 | 3 | Arkansas | FA-Car-25 | FA-Atl-21 |
| 12 | Hodge, KhaDarel | WR | 6-2 | 210 | 7 | Prairie View A&M | FA-24 | FA-LAR-18 |
| 88 | Kalinic, Nikola | TE | 6-4 | 248 | 2 | York | FA-25 | FA-Ind-22 |
| 5 | London, Drake | WR | 6-4 | 215 | 3 | USC | D1-22 | D1-Atl-22 |
| 86 | Matthews, Jesse | WR | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | San Diego State | FA-24 | FA-Hou-23 |
| 34 | McCloud III, Ray-Ray | WR | 5-9 | 185 | 7 | Clemson | FA-SF-24 | D6-Buf-18 |
| 1 | Mooney, Darnell | WR | 5-11 | 180 | 5 | Tulane | FA-Chi-24 | D5c-Chi-20 |
| 8 | Pitts, Kyle | TE | 6-6 | 250 | 4 | Florida | D1-21 | D1-Atl-21 |
| 83 | Polk, Makai | WR | 6-3 | 197 | 1 | Mississippi State | FA-25 | FA-Bal-22 |
| 85 | Quitoriano, Teagan | TE | 6-6 | 259 | 3 | Oregon State | FA-Hou-25 | D5b-Hou-22 |
| 87 | Sills V, David | WR | 6-3 | 211 | 5 | West Virginia | FA-25 | FA-Buf-19 |
| 82 | Washington, Casey | WR | 6-0 | 205 | 1 | Illinois | D6b-24 | D6b-Atl-24 |
| 89 | Woerner, Charlie | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 5 | Georgia | FA-SF-24 | D6-SF-20 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Bergeron, Matthew | OL | 6-5 | 315 | 2 | Syracuse | D2-23 | D2-Atl-23 |
| 73 | Cindric, Matthew | OL | 6-4 | 295 | 1 | Cal | FA-25 | FA-Min-24 |
| 66 | Fisher, Joey | OL | 6-4 | 292 | 1 | Shepherd | FA-25 | FA-SF-23 |
| 52 | Gwyn, Jovaughn | OL | 6-2 | 310 | 2 | South Carolina | D7b-23 | D7b-Atl-23 |
| 68 | Hinton, Kyle | OL | 6-2 | 315 | 2 | Washburn | FA-23 | D7-Min-20 |
| 63 | Lindstrom, Chris | G | 6-4 | 310 | 6 | Boston College | D1a-19 | D1a-Atl-19 |
| 70 | Matthews, Jake | T | 6-5 | 310 | 11 | Texas A&M | D1-14 | D1-Atl-14 |
| 76 | McGary, Kaleb | T | 6-6 | 330 | 6 | Washington | D1b-19 | D1b-Atl-19 |
| 64 | Neuzil, Ryan | OL | 6-3 | 305 | 3 | Appalachian State | FA-22 | FA-Atl-21 |
| 77 | Norton, Storm | OL | 6-7 | 310 | 5 | Toledo | FA-24 | FA-Det-17 |
| 75 | Parker, Brandon | T | 6-8 | 320 | 7 | North Carolina A&T | FA-24 | D3-LV-18 |
| 74 | Wheatley Jr., Tyrone | OL | 6-6 | 320 | 1 | Stony Brook | FA-24 | FA-Chi-21 |
| 71 | Wilkinson, Elijah | T | 6-4 | 310 | 9 | UMass | FA-24 | FA-Den-17 |
| 72 | Zierer, Kilian | T | 6-7 | 312 | 1 | Auburn | FA-25 | FA-Hou-23 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 79 | Aho, Junior | DL | 6-4 | 272 | 1 | SMU | FA-24 | FA-Min-23 |
| 54 | Dorlus, Brandon | DT | 6-3 | 295 | 1 | Oregon | D4-24 | D4-Atl-24 |
| 99 | Fox, Morgan | DL | 6-3 | 275 | 8 | Colorado St.-Pueblo | FA-LAC-25 | FA-LAR-16 |
| 95 | Graham, Ta'Quon | DL | 6-4 | 300 | 4 | Texas | D5a-21 | D5a-Atl-21 |
| 96 | Harrison, Zach | DL | 6-5 | 270 | 2 | Ohio State | D3-23 | D3-Atl-23 |
| 94 | London, LaCale | DL | 6-3 | 297 | 1 | Western Illinois | FA-23 | FA-Chi-20 |
| 90 | Onyemata, David | DL | 6-4 | 310 | 9 | Manitoba | FA-NO-23 | D4-NO-16 |
| 98 | Orhorhoro, Ruke | DL | 6-4 | 295 | 1 | Clemson | D2-24 | D2-Atl-24 |
| 93 | Street, Kentavius | DL | 6-2 | 315 | 6 | NC State | T-Phi-23 | D4-SF-18 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | Andersen, Troy | ILB | 6-4 | 245 | 2 | Montana State | D2b-22 | D2b-Atl-22 |
| 40 | Bertrand, JD | ILB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | Notre Dame | D5-24 | D5-Atl-24 |
| 0 | Deablo, Divine | LB | 6-3 | 223 | 4 | Virginia Tech | FA-LV-25 | D3b-LV-21 |
| 17 | Ebiketie, Arnold | OLB | 6-2 | 250 | 3 | Penn State | D2a-22 | D2a-Atl-22 |
| 55 | Elliss, Kaden | ILB | 6-2 | 240 | 6 | Idaho | FA-NO-23 | D7b-NO-19 |
| 56 | Floyd, Leonard | OLB | 6-3 | 240 | 9 | Georgia | FA-SF-25 | D1-Chi-16 |
| 92 | Kareem, Khalid | OLB | 6-4 | 255 | 4 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | D5-Cin-20 |
| 51 | Malone, DeAngelo | OLB | 6-3 | 235 | 3 | WKU | D3b-22 | D3b-Atl-22 |
| 48 | Trice, Bralen | OLB | 6-4 | 274 | 1 | Washington | D3-24 | D3-Atl-24 |
| 42 | Woods, Josh | ILB | 6-1 | 240 | 5 | Maryland | FA-24 | FA-Chi-18 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | Alford, Dee | CB | 5-11 | 180 | 3 | Tusculum | FA-22 | FA-Atl-22 |
| 3 | Bates III, Jessie | S | 6-1 | 210 | 7 | Wake Forest | FA-Cin-23 | D2-Cin-18 |
| 35 | Brooks, Natrone | CB | 5-11 | 175 | 1 | Southern Miss | FA-23 | FA-Atl-23 |
| 28 | Ford Jr., Mike | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 7 | SE Missouri State | FA-Cle-25 | FA-Det-18 |
| 27 | Fuller, Jordan | S | 6-2 | 203 | 5 | Ohio State | FA-Car-25 | D6-LAR-20 |
| 23 | Hellams, DeMarcco | S | 6-1 | 203 | 2 | Alabama | D7a-23 | D7a-Atl-23 |
| 21 | Hughes, Mike | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 7 | UCF | FA-Det-23 | D1-Min-18 |
| 38 | Jackson, Lamar | CB | 6-2 | 212 | 3 | Nebraska | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-20 |
| 32 | King, Kevin | CB | 6-3 | 200 | 6 | Washington | FA-24 | D2-GB-17 |
| 22 | Phillips III, Clark | CB | 5-9 | 185 | 2 | Utah | D4-23 | D4-Atl-23 |
| 48 | Sapp III, Benny | S | 5-11 | 200 | 1 | Northern Iowa | FA-25 | FA-GB-23 |
| 39 | Taylor, Keith | CB | 6-3 | 195 | 3 | Washington | FA-KC-25 | D5-Car-21 |
| 24 | Terrell Jr., A.J. | CB | 6-1 | 200 | 5 | Clemson | D1-20 | D1-Atl-20 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Koo, Younghoe | K | 5-10 | 195 | 7 | Georgia Southern | FA-19 | FA-LAC-17 |
| 46 | Krieg, Lenny | K | 6-1 | 211 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-Atl-25 |
| 49 | McCullough, Liam | LS | 6-2 | 245 | 3 | Ohio State | FA-22 | FA-LV-20 |
| 13 | Pinion, Bradley | P | 6-5 | 265 | 10 | Clemson | FA-22 | D5-SF-15 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 5 | Drake London | 34 | Ray-Ray McCloud III |
| WR | 1 | Darnell Mooney | 4 | KhaDarel Hodge |
| LT | 70 | Jake Matthews | 77 | Storm Norton |
| LG | 65 | Matthew Bergeron | 71 | Elijah Wilkinson |
| C | 64 | Ryan Neuzil | 52 | Jovaughn Gwyn |
| RG | 63 | Chris Lindstrom | 68 | Kyle Hinton |
| RT | 76 | Kaleb McGary | 77 | Storm Norton |
| TE | 8 | Kyle Pitts | 89 | Charlie Woerner |
| QB | 9 | Michael Penix Jr. | 18 | Kirk Cousins |
| RB | 7 | Bijan Robinson | 30 | Jase McClellan |
| RB | 25 | Tyler Allgeier | 26 | Carlos Washington Jr. |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 96 | Zach Harrison | 95 | Ta'Quon Graham |
| DT | 90 | David Onyemata | 98 | Ruke Orhorhoro |
| DE | 99 | Morgan Fox | 54 | Brandon Dorlus |
| OLB | 56 | Leonard Floyd | 48 | Bralen Trice |
| ILB | 55 | Kaden Elliss | 44 | Troy Andersen |
| ILB | 0 | Divine Deablo | 40 | JD Bertrand |
| OLB | 17 | Arnold Ebiketie | 11 | Jalon Walker (R) |
| CB | 24 | A.J. Terrell Jr. | 22 | Clark Phillips III |
| CB | 21 | Mike Hughes | 28 | Mike Ford Jr. |
| SS | 27 | Jordan Fuller | 31 | Xavier Watts (R) |
| FS | 3 | Jessie Bates III | 23 | DeMarcco Hellams |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 6 | Younghoe Koo | KR | 14 | Jamal Agnew |
| P | 13 | Bradley Pinion | PR | 14 | Jamal Agnew |

**34**

The Falcons allowed 34 passing touchdowns last season, the second-most in the NFL behind Carolina's 35.

## FALCONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jalon Walker | Edge | 6-2 | 245 | Georgia |
| 1 | James Pearce Jr. | Edge | 6-5 | 243 | Tennessee |
| 3 | Xavier Watts | S | 5-11 | 204 | Notre Dame |
| 4 | Billy Bowman Jr. | DB | 5-9 | 192 | Oklahoma |
| 7 | Jack Nelson | OT | 6-7 | 314 | Wisconsin |

The Falcons went wild on defense with their first four picks, adding Jalon Walker and trading up for James Pearce Jr. to boost their pass rush. Both players could become double-digit sack producers regularly if everything goes according to plan. The accomplished Xavier Watts is an immediate contender to start at strong safety, while banshee Billy Bowman Jr. will get his first look at nickelback. Jack Nelson is a developmental tackle with versatility to kick inside to guard. Three UDFAs — cornerback Cobee Bryant (Kansas), wide receiver Nick Nash (San José State) and tight end Joshua Simon (South Carolina) — stand out, too. Losing the 2026 first-rounder in the Pearce trade isn't ideal, but this draft haul is mightily impressive.

# PANTHERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
3

The Carolina Panthers finally showed a little life at the end of the 2024 season, owing largely to an offense that awoke from a two-year slumber. Quarterback Bryce Young's star had fallen so far by the beginning of the season that new head coach Dave Canales benched 2023's No. 1 overall pick for poor performance following two awful games to start the year.

Young later would return, though, after a minor car accident sidelined quarterback Andy Dalton. Young made good on his second chance, showing flashes of the dynamic playmaker college football fans had been used to seeing at Alabama.

Now Carolina is trying to make sure Young keeps that momentum going in his third year. They've given him another playmaker to work with in No. 8 overall pick Tetairoa McMillan, a big-bodied wide receiver from Arizona.

The biggest deficiency that the Panthers worked on in the 2025 offseason, though, was their defense. It was horrid in 2024, allowing the most points ever in an NFL season and also becoming only the fourth team ever to allow 3,000-plus rushing yards in a season Carolina didn't fire defensive coordinator Ejiro Evero after that performance, but he will be on the hot seat this year if Carolina doesn't show marked improvement after the team overhauled that unit in free agency.

After going 5-12 in 2024, the Panthers really need to get better everywhere. But there is a sense of optimism surrounding Canales, who is from the Pete Carroll school of relentless positivity.

## OFFENSE

There's a lot of stability on this side of the ball, as the Panthers have bet big that Young continues his form from the last two months of 2024. The entire offensive starting line basically returns en masse; mountainous guard Robert Hunt was a particular standout last year. Left tackle Ikem Ekwonu remains iffy against some speed rushers, and the Panthers hesitated before picking up his fifth-year option, but they ultimately decided to do so. Right tackle Taylor Moton is a durable mainstay. The backups have a lot of experience as well.

Although Young is the most well-known Panther, running back Chuba Hubbard is the best skill player on the team, and tailback may be Carolina's deepest position. A leftover from the Matt Rhule era, Hubbard has become a sturdy NFL running back who is a breakaway threat. He had career highs in rushing yards (1,195) and rushing touchdowns (10) in 2024 and signed a lucrative contract extension in November. Unless Hubbard gets hurt, he's the clear No. 1 back. The backup is another 1,000-yard rusher — former Dallas Cowboy Rico Dowdle, who ran for 1,079 yards in 2024 and now assumes the No. 2 role. Jonathon Brooks, a second-round pick in 2024, suffered his second torn ACL in 13 months in December and is out for the season.

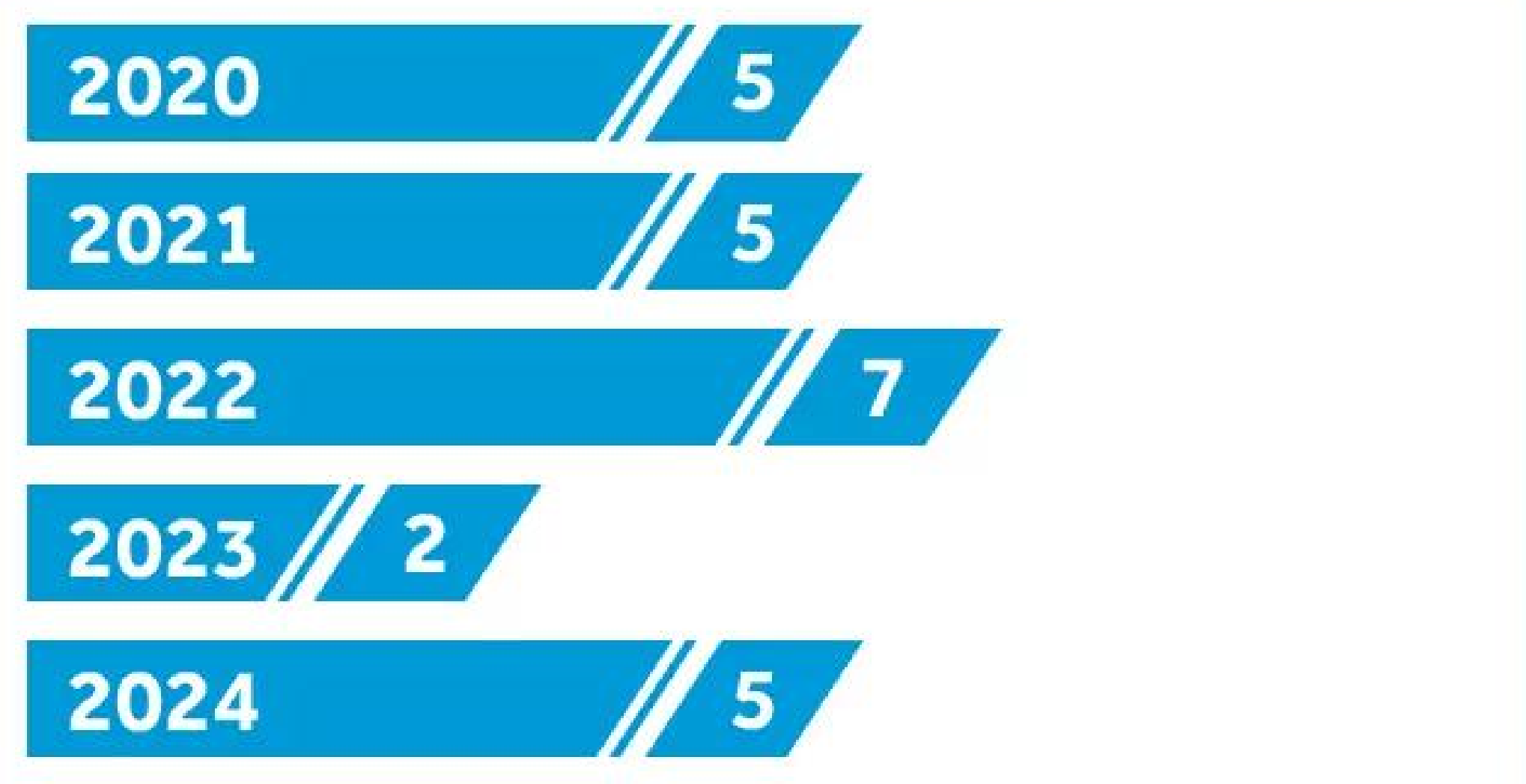
At wide receiver, the Panthers' No. 1 isn't nearly as clear. Maybe it will be McMillan, a large target with great hands. Perhaps it will be Adam Thielen, the slot receiver who has filled that role by default the past two years for Young but whose production dropped in 2024. Maybe Xavier Legette can rebound from a relatively disappointing rookie year to have a strong Year 2. The Panthers also signed Hunter Renfrow, who was out of football in 2024, for depth right after the draft. What the team still lacks is a true speedster at the position. Jalen Coker, an undrafted free agent in 2024, could be a bright spot.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | at Arizona | 4:05 |
| Sept. 21 | Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Sept 28 | at New England | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | Miami | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | Dallas | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | at N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | at Green Bay | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | at Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Nov. 24 | at San Francisco | 8:15 |
| Nov. 30 | L.A. Rams | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | BYE | |
| Dec. 14 | at New Orleans | 4:25 |
| Dec. 21 | Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| TBD | Seattle | |
| TBD | at Tampa Bay | |

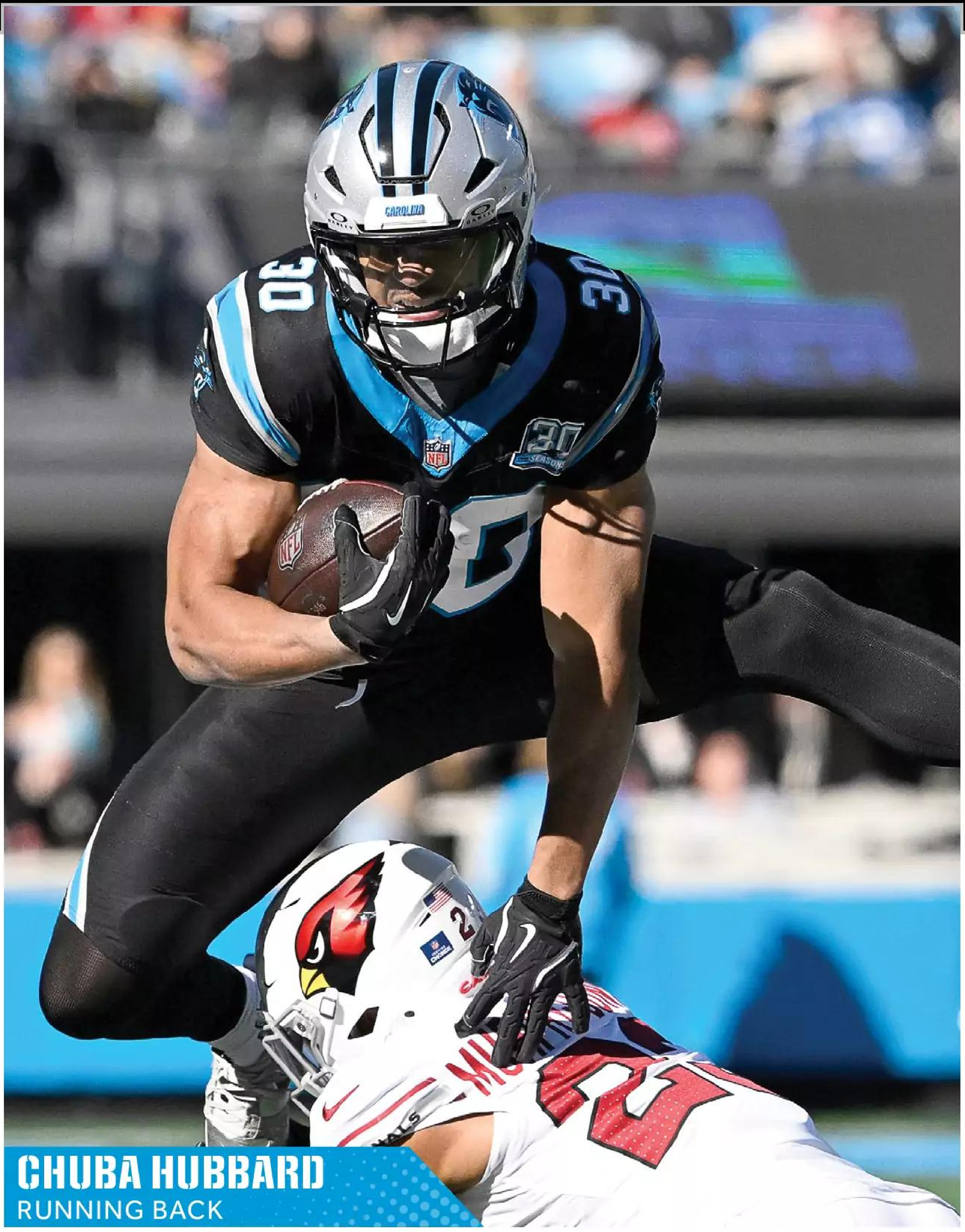
*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Dave Canales
**Record With Team:** 5-12
**Career Record:** 5-12
**Offensive Coordinator:** Brad Idzik
**Defensive Coordinator:** Ejiro Evero
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Tracy Smith
**Quarterbacks:** Will Harriger
**Running Backs:** Bernie Parmalee
**Wide Receivers:** Rob Moore
**Tight Ends:** Pat McPherson
**Offensive Line:** Joe Gilbert
**Assistant Head Coach/Run Game Coordinator:** Harold Goodwin
**Defensive Line:** Todd Wash
**Linebackers:** Peter Hansen
**Outside Linebackers:** AC Carter
**Secondary:** Renaldo Hill
**Defensive Passing Game Coordinator:** Jonathan Cooley
**Senior Defensive Assistant:** Dom Capers



**CHUBA HUBBARD**
RUNNING BACK

BOB DONNAN-IMAGN IMAGES

The team hasn't had a big-time receiving tight end since Greg Olsen left. Tommy Tremble and 2024 fourth-rounder Ja'Tavion Sanders will vie for the starting job and more respect from defenses.

## DEFENSE

The Panthers' two best defensive players are interior lineman Derrick Brown and cornerback Jaycee Horn. They've plowed a lot of money into both men. Horn was a rose among the thorns in 2024, earning his first Pro Bowl nod and becoming Carolina's lockdown corner. Brown, however, suffered a Week 1 knee injury and missed the rest of the season. He is fully healthy and should enhance the run defense all by himself.

Carolina's 32 sacks in 2024 tied for the third-fewest in the NFL, and the team has attempted to bolster that feeble effort with veteran Patrick Jones II and two high draft choices who will be edge rushers in the Panthers' 3-4 scheme — Nic Scourton and Princely Umanmielen. The run defense can't be any worse, and 332-pound interior lineman Bobby Brown III should help Derrick Brown fill some of the holes inside. Tershawn Wharton will also help in that regard. But the most significant thing to watch is if Derrick Brown stays healthy and returns to form — the Panthers are a different defense with him on the field.

The Panthers' two inside linebackers will be veteran Josey Jewell and second-year player Trevin Wallace after the team parted ways with Shaq Thompson. Jewell is a solid tackler, while Wallace has some big-play potential. The team re-signed steady Mike Jackson to start at cornerback alongside the ball-hawking Horn. Hard-hitting safety Tre'von Moehrig was a notable free-agent acquisition and one who will be counted on to improve a spot where the Panthers had little turnover production a year ago.

## SPECIALISTS

There are some question marks here. Carolina has turned over both its placekicker and its punter, letting go of Eddy Piñeiro and Johnny Hekker, respectively. To replace Hekker, the team signed another veteran punter in Sam Martin. At kicker, however, the future is a little murky. Undrafted rookie free agent Ryan Fitzgerald, formerly of Florida State, has a stronger leg than Piñeiro and went 5-for-5 from 50-plus yards for the Seminoles last year while not missing a single field goal of any length. The job is his to lose. But if he struggles, don't discount the possibility of the Panthers signing a veteran kicker at some point during the season.

Long-snapper JJ Jansen, the longest-tenured Panther in history, should return once again. The return spots may be once again manned by Raheem Blackshear, but fourth-round pick Trevor Etienne (former Georgia running back and the younger brother of Travis) will also get a shot to make a mark.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Carolina hasn't made the playoffs since the 2017 season, and its run of seven straight losing seasons under owner David Tepper has been an embarrassment in a league where winning matters above all else. This season feels like an opportunity, though, with the NFC South in flux and Young ascending.

Still, the Panthers have to start stopping people, especially on the ground. If they can just become a middle-of-the-pack D instead of the dead-last unit they were a year ago, that would be a major boon. Offensively, the establishment of a No. 1 wideout is paramount, as is Young continuing to display the talent he did at the end of last year. If all that happens, this feels like a team that could flirt with the .500 mark all season and, if it's lucky, factor into the divisional race for the first time in a long time.

## 2024 RESULTS (5-12)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at New Orleans | L | 10-47 |
| Sept. | 15 | L.A. Chargers | L | 3-26 |
| Sept. | 22 | at Las Vegas | W | 36-22 |
| Sept. | 29 | Cincinnati | L | 24-34 |
| Oct. | 6 | at Chicago | L | 10-36 |
| Oct. | 13 | Atlanta | L | 20-38 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Washington | L | 7-40 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Denver | L | 14-28 |
| Nov. | 3 | New Orleans | W | 23-22 |
| Nov. | 10 | N.Y. Giants (ot) | W | 20-17 |
| Nov. | 24 | Kansas City | L | 27-30 |
| Dec. | 1 | Tampa Bay | L | 23-26 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Philadelphia | L | 16-22 |
| Dec. | 15 | Dallas | L | 14-30 |
| Dec. | 22 | Arizona (ot) | W | 36-30 |
| Dec. | 29 | at Tampa Bay | L | 14-48 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Atlanta (ot) | W | 44-38 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 298.0 | 29 | 14 |
| Rushing | 110.5 | 18 | 10 |
| Passing | 187.5 | 30 | 15 |
| Scoring | 20.1 | 23 | 13 |
| Third Down % | 36.0 | 26 | 13 |
| Points/Play | 0.343 | 21 | 12 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 404.5 | 32 | 16 |
| Rushing | 179.8 | 32 | 16 |
| Passing | 224.7 | 23 | 12 |
| Scoring | 31.4 | 32 | 16 |
| Interceptions | 9 | T24 | T12 |
| Sacks | 32 | T29 | 15 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.463 | 32 | 16 |
| TO Differential | -5 | T20 | T10 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bryce Young | 384 | 234 | 2,403 | 15 | 9 |
| Andy Dalton | 160 | 106 | 989 | 7 | 6 |

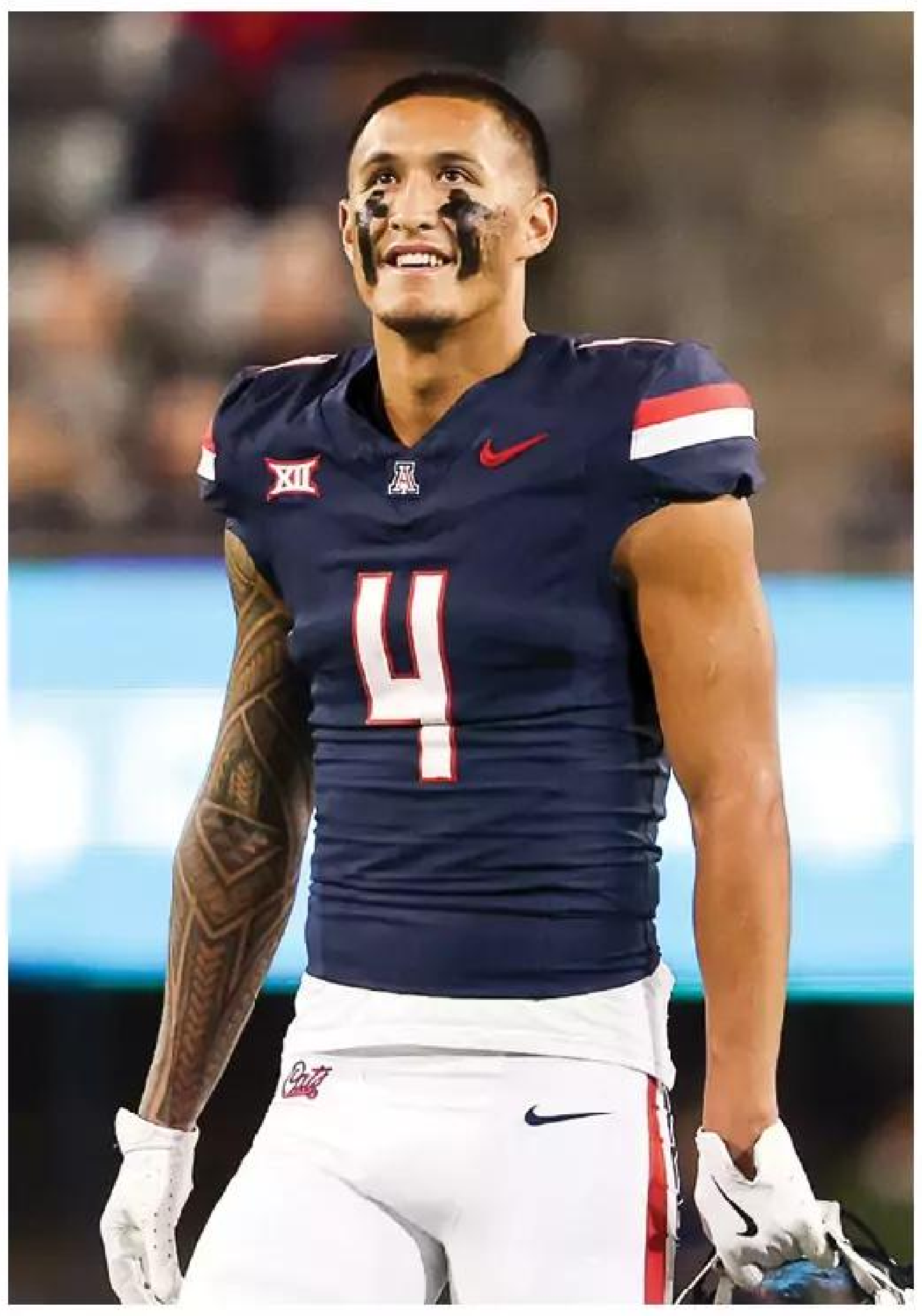
| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chuba Hubbard | 250 | 1,195 | 4.8 | 10 |
| Bryce Young | 43 | 249 | 5.8 | 6 |
| Miles Sanders | 55 | 205 | 3.7 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Xavier Legette | 49 | 497 | 10.1 | 4 |
| Adam Thielen | 48 | 615 | 12.8 | 5 |
| Chuba Hubbard | 43 | 171 | 4.0 | 1 |
| Ja'Tavion Sanders | 33 | 342 | 10.4 | 1 |
| Jalen Coker | 32 | 478 | 14.9 | 2 |
| David Moore | 32 | 351 | 11.0 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Eddy Piñeiro, 22-26 FGs, 33-35 PATs, 99 points
**TACKLES:** Xavier Woods, 119; Josey Jewell, 97
**SACKS:** Jadeveon Clowney, 5.5; A'Shawn Robinson, 5.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Xavier Woods, 3; Mike Jackson, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**T-MAC, PLEASE** New No. 1 draft pick **Tetairoa McMillan** doesn't like his name ever being shortened to "Tet," as it was in many publications throughout the draft process. He began his first call with Charlotte-area reporters with this admonition: to please call him either "T-Mac" or else "Nalo," but never "Tet." The "Nalo" nickname, which McMillan has since turned into a clothing brand, comes from his hometown of Waimānalo.



**NICE FOR BRYCE** Panthers quarterback Bryce Young campaigned openly to Carolina general manager Dan Morgan and head coach Dave Canales for the team to select McMillan, who impressed the quarterback during a pre-draft throwing session in California. When the Panthers did pick him, Canales immediately called Young, who the coach said was "fired up."

**PRINCELY SACK ARTIST** The Panthers' third-round pick, Princely Umanmielen, is the grandson of a Nigerian tribal chief. His father wanted to pay tribute to this heritage when naming his four sons. So besides Princely, the Umanmielen brothers are named Prince, Princewill and Princeton.

**SORRY, CAMPERS** If you were planning on attending an on-site Panthers training camp practice in Charlotte in 2025, you will be out of luck. The Panthers aren't opening their regular training camp practices to fans in 2025 and also won't in 2026, due to the ongoing construction of a new indoor fieldhouse. The team moved its training camp from its longtime home in Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Charlotte in 2024, and that year it had 14 open practices. The team will have at least one open practice in Bank of America Stadium, however.

# SCOUTING THE PANTHERS

## OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CAROLINA

"The light finally clicked on for Bryce Young, and I think the benching had a lot to do with his improvement. He got to watch from the sideline and develop. Dave Canales' understanding of the quarterback position and ability to teach and tailor the offense to one of the smallest quarterbacks in the league are big factors in Young turning things around. … Drafting some young wide receivers with size and speed to go with veteran Adam Thielen were good moves by Dan Morgan. Tetairoa McMillan is basically open even if he's not open. Xavier Legette is a home-run threat. … Can't say that Ikem Ekwonu is a bust at left tackle, but can't say he's been all that great, either. He's in the solid category. … Robert Hunt plays with heavy hands and bad intentions. … Chuba Hubbard, Rico Dowdle and Trevor Etienne give the Panthers plenty of running back options. … Having Derrick Brown on a second contract was a case of picking the 3-4 defensive end over the standup edge as Brian Burns went to the Giants. Carolina is happy with how things worked out. … The Panthers are excited about rookie edge Nic Scourton. … Tre'von Moehrig's range and playmaking abilities upgraded this secondary. … Jaycee Horn was briefly the highest-paid corner in the game in terms of average compensation annually. He's a leggy, long defensive back who plays the game smoothly. … Josey Jewell is a long day at the office for running backs. Jewell loves to hit, and it shows."

ARYANNA FRANK-IMAGN IMAGES

# 2025 PANTHERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | Dalton, Andy | QB | 6-2 | 220 | 14 | TCU | FA-NO-23 | D2-Cin-11 |
| 16 | Plummer, Jack | QB | 6-5 | 215 | 1 | Louisville | FA-24 | FA-Car-24 |
| 9 | Young, Bryce | QB | 5-10 | 204 | 2 | Alabama | D1-23 | D1-Car-23 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Bailey, Emani | RB | 5-7 | 202 | 1 | TCU | FA-24 | FA-KC-24 |
| 3 | Blackshear, Raheem | RB | 5-9 | 190 | 3 | Virginia Tech | FA-22 | FA-Buf-22 |
| 24 | Brooks, Jonathon | RB | 6-0 | 207 | 1 | Texas | D2-24 | D2-Car-24 |
| | Dowdle, Rico | RB | 5-11 | 218 | 5 | South Carolina | FA-Dal-25 | FA-Dal-20 |
| 30 | Hubbard, Chuba | RB | 6-1 | 210 | 4 | Oklahoma State | D4-21 | D4-Car-21 |
| 35 | Johnson, Dillon | RB | 6-0 | 215 | 1 | Washington | FA-24 | FA-Ten-24 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 88 | Chisena, Dan | WR | 6-3 | 203 | 4 | Penn State | FA-24 | FA-Min-20 |
| 18 | Coker, Jalen | WR | 6-3 | 213 | 1 | Holy Cross | FA-24 | FA-Car-24 |
| 46 | Dafney, Dominique | TE | 6-2 | 243 | 3 | Indiana State | FA-24 | FA-Ind-20 |
| 17 | Legette, Xavier | WR | 6-3 | 227 | 1 | South Carolina | D1-24 | D1-Car-24 |
| 15 | Luther, TJ | WR | 5-11 | 189 | 1 | Gardner-Webb | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| | Mitchell, James | TE | 6-4 | 252 | 3 | Virginia Tech | FA-25 | D5-Det-22 |
| 83 | Moore, David | WR | 6-0 | 220 | 7 | East Central (Okla.) | FA-TB-24 | D7-Sea-17 |
| | Renfrow, Hunter | WR | 5-10 | 185 | 5 | Clemson | FA-25 | D5-LV-19 |
| 0 | Sanders, Ja'Tavion | TE | 6-4 | 243 | 1 | Texas | D4-24 | D4-Car-24 |
| 85 | Sullivan, Stephen | TE | 6-5 | 245 | 3 | LSU | FA-20 | D7-Sea-20 |
| 19 | Thielen, Adam | WR | 6-2 | 200 | 11 | Minnesota State | FA-Min-23 | FA-Min-13 |
| | Tremayne, Brycen | WR | 6-4 | 212 | 2 | Stanford | FA-25 | FA-Was-23 |
| 82 | Tremble, Tommy | TE | 6-4 | 250 | 4 | Notre Dame | D3b-21 | D3b-Car-21 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65 | Carter, Ja'Tyre | OL | 6-3 | 311 | 3 | Southern | FA-24 | D7-Chi-22 |
| 70 | Christensen, Brady | OL | 6-6 | 300 | 4 | BYU | D3a-21 | D3a-Car-21 |
| 63 | Corbett, Austin | C | 6-4 | 305 | 7 | Nevada | FA-LAR-22 | D2a-Cle-18 |
| 79 | Ekwonu, Ikem | T | 6-4 | 320 | 3 | NC State | D1-22 | D1-Car-22 |
| 50 | Hunt, Robert | G | 6-6 | 335 | 5 | Louisiana | FA-Mia-24 | D2a-Mia-20 |
| 61 | Kingston, Jarrett | OL | 6-4 | 308 | 1 | USC | W-SF-24 | D6-SF-24 |
| 68 | Lewis, Damien | G | 6-2 | 327 | 5 | LSU | FA-Sea-24 | D3-Sea-20 |
| 64 | Mays, Cade | C | 6-6 | 325 | 3 | Tennessee | D6b-22 | D6b-Car-22 |
| 72 | Moton, Taylor | T | 6-5 | 325 | 8 | Western Michigan | D2b-17 | D2b-Car-17 |
| 77 | Nijman, Yosh | T | 6-7 | 314 | 5 | Virginia Tech | FA-GB-24 | FA-GB-19 |
| 73 | Walton, Brandon | OL | 6-5 | 300 | 3 | Florida Atlantic | FA-24 | FA-Buf-20 |
| 62 | Zavala, Chandler | G | 6-5 | 325 | 2 | NC State | D4-23 | D4-Car-23 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 | Brown III, Bobby | DT | 6-4 | 328 | 4 | Texas A&M | FA-LAR-25 | D4a-LAR-21 |
| 95 | Brown, Derrick | DE | 6-5 | 320 | 5 | Auburn | D1-20 | D1-Car-20 |
| | Clark, Jerrod | DT | 6-3 | 334 | 1 | Coastal Carolina | FA-25 | FA-LAC-23 |
| 96 | Crumedy, Jaden | DT | 6-5 | 305 | 1 | Mississippi State | D6-24 | D6-Car-24 |
| 93 | Ray, LaBryan | DE | 6-4 | 290 | 2 | Alabama | FA-23 | FA-NE-22 |
| 74 | Roberts, Sam | DT | 6-5 | 300 | 3 | NW Missouri State | FA-24 | D6-NE-22 |
| 94 | Robinson, A'Shawn | DE | 6-4 | 330 | 9 | Alabama | FA-NYG-24 | D2-Det-16 |
| 99 | Tuttle, Shy | DT | 6-3 | 300 | 6 | Tennessee | FA-NO-23 | FA-NO-19 |
| 92 | Wharton, Tershawn | DT | 6-1 | 280 | 5 | Missouri S&T | FA-KC-25 | FA-KC-20 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 38 | Barno, Amaré | OLB | 6-6 | 245 | 3 | Virginia Tech | D6a-22 | D6a-Car-22 |
| | Basham, Boogie | OLB | 6-3 | 274 | 4 | Wake Forest | FA-25 | D2-Buf-21 |
| 53 | Cherelus, Claudin | LB | 6-2 | 230 | 2 | Alcorn State | W-NYJ-23 | FA-NYJ-23 |
| 48 | Incoom, Thomas | OLB | 6-4 | 265 | 2 | Central Michigan | FA-24 | FA-Den-23 |
| 47 | Jewell, Josey | LB | 6-2 | 236 | 7 | Iowa | FA-Den-24 | D4a-Den-18 |
| 52 | Johnson, D.J. | OLB | 6-4 | 270 | 2 | Oregon | D3-23 | D3-Car-23 |
| | Jones II, Patrick | OLB | 6-4 | 264 | 4 | Pitt | FA-Min-25 | D3d-Min-21 |
| 58 | Mwansa, Mapalo | OLB | 6-2 | 230 | 1 | None | FA-25 | FA-Car-25 |
| 49 | Rhattigan, Jon | LB | 6-0 | 239 | 4 | Army | W-Sea-24 | FA-Sea-21 |
| | Rozeboom, Christian | LB | 6-2 | 237 | 4 | South Dakota St. | FA-LAR-25 | FA-LAR-20 |
| 56 | Wallace, Trevin | LB | 6-1 | 237 | 1 | Kentucky | D3-24 | D3-Car-24 |
| 41 | Windmon, Jacoby | LB | 6-2 | 250 | 1 | Michigan State | FA-24 | FA-Pit-24 |
| 98 | Wonnum, D.J. | OLB | 6-5 | 258 | 5 | South Carolina | FA-Min-24 | D4a-Min-20 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Bartholomew, Shemar | CB | 6-1 | 200 | 1 | Georgia Southern | W-NYJ-24 | FA-NYJ-24 |
| | Devonshire, MJ | CB | 5-11 | 186 | 1 | Pitt | W-LV-25 | D7b-LV-24 |
| 29 | Evans, Akayleb | CB | 6-2 | 198 | 3 | Missouri | W-Min-24 | D4-Min-22 |
| 8 | Horn, Jaycee | CB | 6-1 | 200 | 4 | South Carolina | D1-21 | D1-Car-21 |
| 2 | Jackson, Mike | CB | 6-1 | 212 | 5 | Miami (Fla.) | T-Sea-24 | D5-Dal-19 |
| | Moehrig, Tre'von | S | 6-2 | 202 | 4 | TCU | FA-LV-25 | D2-LV-21 |
| 36 | Richardson, Demani | S | 6-1 | 215 | 1 | Texas A&M | FA-24 | FA-Car-24 |
| 22 | Robinson, Jammie | S | 5-11 | 195 | 2 | Florida State | D5-23 | D5-Car-23 |
| 21 | Scott, Nick | S | 5-11 | 201 | 6 | Penn State | FA-Cin-24 | D7a-LAR-19 |
| 26 | Smith-Wade, Chau | CB | 5-11 | 176 | 1 | Washington State | D5-24 | D5-Car-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | Jansen, JJ | LS | 6-2 | 235 | 17 | Notre Dame | T-GB-09 | FA-GB-08 |
| 6 | Martin, Sam | P | 6-1 | 211 | 12 | Appalachian State | FA-Buf-25 | D5-Det-13 |
| | Wright, Matthew | K | 6-0 | 179 | 4 | UCF | FA-25 | FA-Pit-19 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 17 | Xavier Legette | 18 | Jalen Coker |
| WR | 4 | Tetairoa McMillan (R) | 83 | David Moore |
| WR | 19 | Adam Thielen | | Hunter Renfrow |
| LT | 79 | Ikem Ekwonu | 77 | Yosh Nijman |
| LG | 68 | Damien Lewis | 62 | Chandler Zavala |
| C | 63 | Austin Corbett | 70 | Brady Christensen |
| RG | 50 | Robert Hunt | 64 | Cade Mays |
| RT | 72 | Taylor Moton | 70 | Brady Christensen |
| TE | 82 | Tommy Tremble | 0 | Ja'Tavion Sanders |
| QB | 9 | Bryce Young | 14 | Andy Dalton |
| RB | 30 | Chuba Hubbard | | Rico Dowdle |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DT | 92 | Tershawn Wharton | 94 | A'Shawn Robinson |
| NT | 97 | Bobby Brown III | 76 | Cam Jackson (R) |
| DT | 95 | Derrick Brown | 93 | LaBryan Ray |
| EDGE | | Patrick Jones II | 11 | Nic Scourton (R) |
| ILB | 56 | Trevin Wallace | | Christian Rozeboom |
| ILB | 47 | Josey Jewell | 53 | Claudin Cherelus |
| EDGE | 98 | D.J. Wonnum | 33 | Princely Umanmielen (R) |
| CB | 2 | Mike Jackson | 26 | Chau Smith-Wade |
| CB | 8 | Jaycee Horn | 27 | Shemar Batholomew |
| SS | | Tre'von Moehrig | 22 | Lathan Ransom (R) |
| FS | 36 | Demani Richardson | 21 | Nick Scott |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | | Ryan Fitzgerald (R) | KR | 23 | Trevor Etienne (R) |
| P | 6 | Sam Martin | PR | 3 | Raheem Blackshear |

**+12.4%**

Adam Thielen led all wideouts with a +12.4% catch rate over expected per NFL Next Gen Stats.

# PANTHERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Tetairoa McMillan | WR | 6-5 | 212 | Arizona |
| 2 | Nic Scourton | Edge | 6-2 | 257 | Texas A&M |
| 3 | Princely Umanmielen | Edge | 6-4 | 244 | Ole Miss |
| 4 | Trevor Etienne | RB | 5-8 | 198 | Georgia |
| 4 | Lathan Ransom | S | 6-0 | 206 | Ohio State |
| 5 | Cam Jackson | DT | 6-6 | 328 | Florida |
| 5 | Mitchell Evans | TE | 6-5 | 258 | Notre Dame |
| 6 | Jimmy Horn Jr. | WR | 5-8 | 174 | Colorado |

For the second year in a row, the Panthers used their first-round pick on a wide receiver. Hopefully Tetairoa McMillan has a better first year than Xavier Legette, who struggled as a rookie. McMillan is a big receiver with excellent hands who was productive in college. The Panthers hope "T-Mac" could be Mike Evans redux. Carolina then double-dipped on edge rushers in rounds 2 and 3, hoping to find more juice for a pass rush that tied for 29th in sacks in 2024. Nic Scourton is more of a bull rusher; Princely Umanmielen wins with speed and ability to bend around the edge. Lathan Ransom and Mitchell Evans join thin position groups and might be able to contribute quickly. Jimmy Horn Jr. is a speedster without much size.

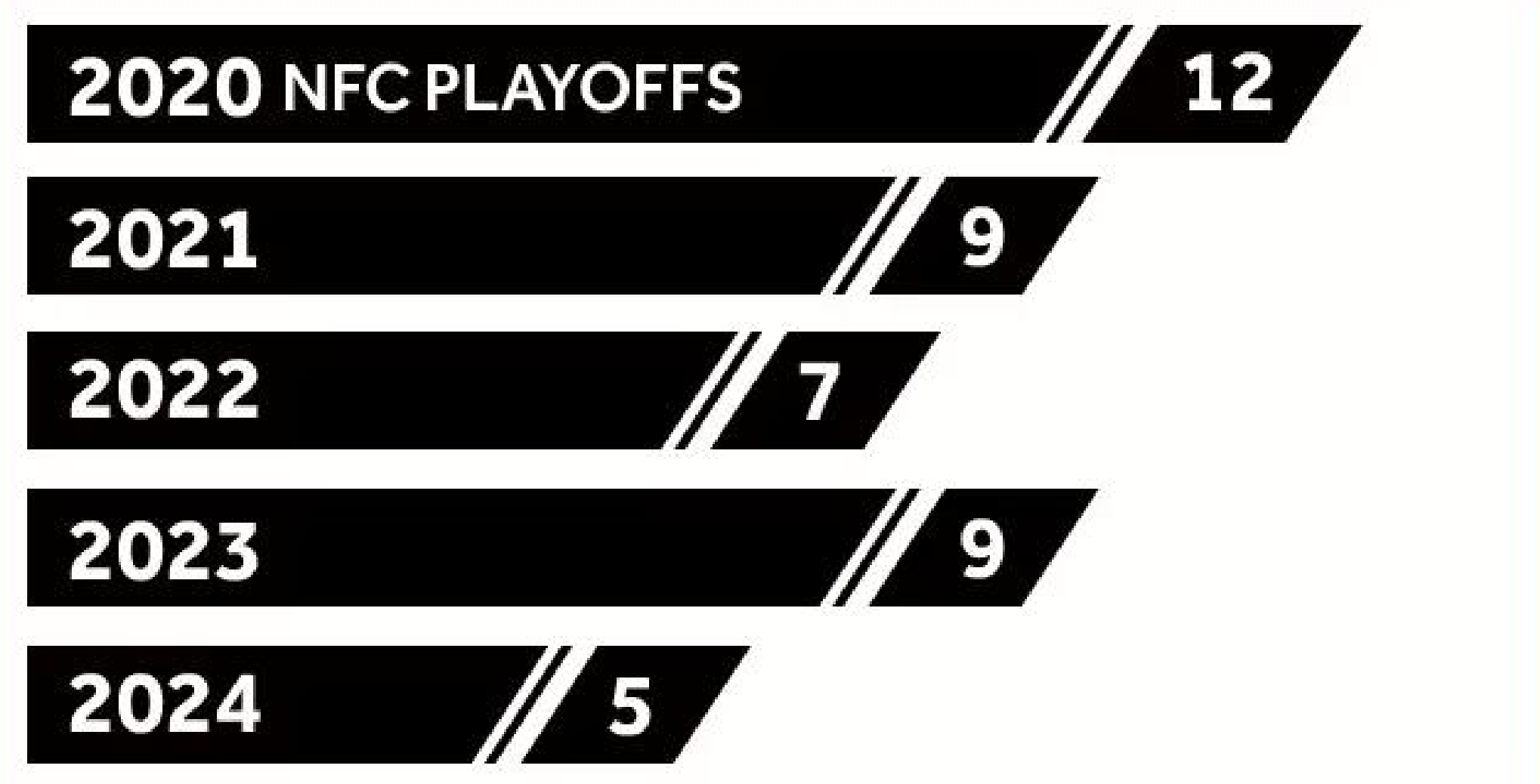
# NO SAINTS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Arizona | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | San Francisco | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Seattle | 4:05 |
| Sept. 28 | at Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Oct. 12 | New England | 4:25 |
| Oct. 19 | at Chicago | 1:00 |
| Oct. 26 | Tampa Bay | 4:05 |
| Nov. 2 | at L.A. Rams | 4:05 |
| Nov. 9 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | BYE | |
| Nov. 23 | Atlanta | 4:25 |
| Nov. 30 | at Miami | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | Carolina | 4:25 |
| Dec. 21 | N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| TBD | at Atlanta | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Kellen Moore
**Record With Team:** First season
**Career Record:** First season
**Offensive Coordinator:** Doug Nussmeier
**Defensive Coordinator:** Brandon Staley
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Phil Galiano
**Quarterbacks:** Scott Tolzien
**Associate Head Coach/Running Backs:** Joel Thomas
**Run Game Coordinator:** T.J. Paganetti
**Wide Receivers:** Keith Williams
**Tight Ends:** Chase Haslett
**Offensive Line:** Brendan Nugent
**Senior Offensive Asst.:** Scott Linehan
**Defensive Line:** Bo Davis
**Edges:** Jay Rodgers
**Linebackers:** Peter Sirmon
**Cornerbacks:** Grady Brown
**Defensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Terry Joseph
**Senior Defensive Asst.:** Peter Giunta

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
4

For years, the New Orleans Saints have pushed off that dreaded R word — rebuild — but the decision may have been taken out of their hands this spring.

Quarterback Derek Carr made a shocking retirement announcement in May, two weeks after the Saints selected his potential successor, Louisville quarterback Tyler Shough, in the second round of the NFL Draft.

While the news probably limits what the Saints' 2025 ceiling will be as a team, it also forces the team to take a more future-centric approach. With Carr officially off the roster, New Orleans will enter the 2025 season with one of three young quarterbacks serving as the starter under first-year head coach Kellen Moore.

For the first time since 2006, when the Saints hired Sean Payton and signed Drew Brees within a few months time, New Orleans will go into a season with a new head coach and a new quarterback. The Saints are desperately hoping for similar long-term results, even if that means going through some growing pains in Year 1.

## OFFENSE

Before Carr announced his retirement, there was already some significant doubt about his availability in 2025 because of a shoulder injury that became public knowledge in early April. The Saints also appeared comfortable with the idea of moving on from Carr and his contract after the 2025 season.

All of which led to New Orleans selecting Shough 40th overall in this year's draft. The plan was to have Carr start if healthy but to hopefully have his successor in the building and ready to play if needed. That plan has now been accelerated.

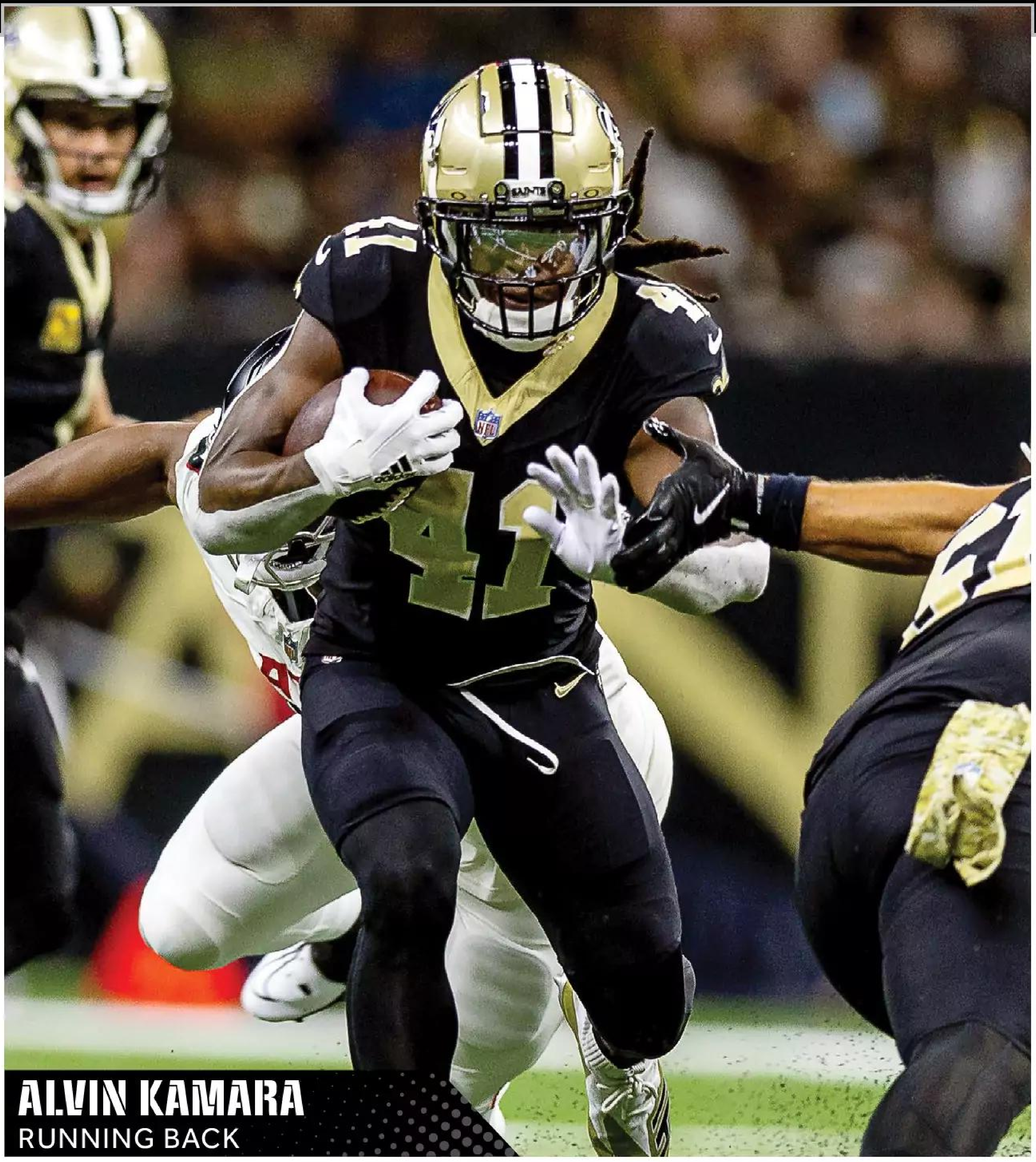
New Orleans has not yet committed to Shough as the starter, and he's set to enter a training camp competition with two other young signal-callers — Spencer Rattler and Jake Haener, who combined to go winless in seven starts last season.

There is a lot to like about Shough as a player. He has prototypical size (6-foot-5, 223 pounds), he's an athletic mover who can impact the game as a runner or a roll-out passer and he may have had the best throwing arm in the draft class. But there are reasons he fell to the second round: He will turn 26 in September, and he dealt with three separate season-ending injuries in his seven-season college career.

Whoever wins the quarterback competition will have one of the NFL's best offensive minds calling plays. In six seasons as a play-caller, Moore has produced four top-10 scoring offenses. He tailored his offense around his personnel throughout that time, most notably during last year's Super Bowl run with the Philadelphia Eagles, which should help him find some level of immediate success in New Orleans.

It's not as though the cupboard is bare around the young quarterback. Alvin Kamara proved he was still a dangerous player last year, totaling a career-best 950 rushing yards before a groin injury forced him to miss the final three games. Chris Olave and Rashid Shaheed are an electric (if imperfect) 1-2 punch at receiver, and New Orleans added an accomplished veteran in Brandin Cooks to serve as the No. 3 option. The team has invested heavily in its offensive line, and only added to that with No. 9 overall pick Kelvin Banks Jr. in April's draft.

The Saints undoubtedly have good NFL players on their offense. The prob-



**ALVIN KAMARA**
RUNNING BACK

STEPHEN LEW-IMAGN IMAGES

lem last year was health: Kamara missed three games, and Olave and Shaheed combined to play in 14. Center Erik McCoy and guard Cesar Ruiz both missed extensive time. If New Orleans can stay healthier this year, the offense should improve — even with a young quarterback under center.

## DEFENSE

Another dramatic change to the organization this offseason came on this side of the ball, and it was necessary: Despite benefiting from relatively good health in 2024, New Orleans ranked 30th in total defense.

Moore hired former Chargers head coach Brandon Staley to spearhead the defensive turnaround, bringing in a coordinator who had the NFL's No. 1 scoring and total defense with the 2020 Los Angeles Rams. He will implement a new base scheme, switching to a 3-4 as well as some different types of coverage ideas than what New Orleans had been playing.

The Saints traded for a run-clogging defensive tackle, Davon Godchaux, and signed a versatile safety in Justin Reid to help turn things around. They also re-signed edge rusher Chase Young and used four of their top six draft picks on defensive players to inject some youth into an aging defense.

Age is definitely still a concern. Cameron Jordan (36), Demario Davis (36) and Tyrann Mathieu (33) all showed signs of their years last season, and it remains a question whether they can still be impact players.

The secondary is also a concern. The Saints traded star corner Marshon Lattimore midway through last season, then lost another promising corner, Paulson Adebo, in free agency.

Fourth-year cornerback Alontae Taylor has shown signs of being a tremendous playmaker, but the Saints have also struggled to define his role thus far. Second-year corner Kool-Aid McKinstry needs to develop quickly after posting a mediocre rookie campaign.

## SPECIALISTS

The Saints' incumbent specialists all should be in line to return, but nobody has great job security heading into 2025.

Placekicker Blake Grupe was solid in his second season, connecting on 27 of his 31 attempts with a long of 57, but New Orleans kept promising Irishman Charlie Smyth on its practice squad all of last year to develop him and could be ready to hand him the job. Smyth has range past 60 yards.

Punter Matthew Hayball won the job last summer and turned in a below-average debut season — though he led the NFL in punts downed inside the 20 (41), he averaged just 40.4 net yards per punt. He will have to win another camp competition.

Shaheed is one of the NFL's best return men, a claim he backed up last year with another punt return touchdown. But he is coming off a major knee injury and may be too valuable on offense to continue using in the return game. The Saints have nobody else near his caliber on the roster.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

New Orleans had its most acceptable off-ramp toward a rebuild in 20 years this offseason. A last-place finish in the division and a new, young head coach pushed its fan base to accept a couple of potential down years in exchange for a better shot at competing in the future. Instead, the Saints did what they usually do and doubled down, making win-now moves in free agency and the draft.

But the future arrived in New Orleans anyway after Carr's retirement, and the Saints now have an opportunity. If one of the young quarterbacks wins the job and shows potential, the Saints will have a cheap player at the most important position. If all of them fail and the team craters, there is nothing preventing the Saints from taking another quarterback next season.

Whether it is a good or bad season in New Orleans is suddenly beside the point. There is finally a light at the end of the tunnel.

## 2024 RESULTS (5-12)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Carolina | W | 47-10 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Dallas | W | 44-19 |
| Sept. | 22 | Philadelphia | L | 12-15 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Atlanta | L | 24-26 |
| Oct. | 7 | at Kansas City | L | 13-26 |
| Oct. | 13 | Tampa Bay | L | 27-51 |
| Oct. | 17 | Denver | L | 10-33 |
| Oct. | 27 | at L.A. Chargers | L | 8-26 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Carolina | L | 22-23 |
| Nov. | 10 | Atlanta | W | 20-17 |
| Nov. | 17 | Cleveland | W | 35-14 |
| Dec. | 1 | L.A. Rams | L | 14-21 |
| Dec. | 8 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 14-11 |
| Dec. | 15 | Washington | L | 19-20 |
| Dec. | 23 | at Green Bay | L | 0-34 |
| Dec. | 29 | Las Vegas | L | 10-25 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Tampa Bay | L | 19-27 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 320.1 | 21 | 13 |
| Rushing | 114.9 | 14 | 9 |
| Passing | 205.2 | 23 | 12 |
| Scoring | 19.9 | T24 | 14 |
| Third Down % | 35.2 | 28 | 15 |
| Points/Play | 0.328 | 23 | 13 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 379.9 | 30 | 15 |
| Rushing | 141.4 | 31 | 15 |
| Passing | 238.5 | 27 | 13 |
| Scoring | 23.4 | 19 | 11 |
| Interceptions | 14 | 11 | 4 |
| Sacks | 39 | T18 | 11 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.356 | 12 | 5 |
| TO Differential | -2 | T16 | 8 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Derek Carr | 279 | 189 | 2,145 | 15 | 5 |
| Spencer Rattler | 228 | 130 | 1,317 | 4 | 5 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alvin Kamara | 228 | 950 | 4.2 | 6 |
| Taysom Hill | 39 | 278 | 7.1 | 6 |
| Jamaal Williams | 48 | 164 | 3.4 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alvin Kamara | 68 | 543 | 8.0 | 2 |
| Juwan Johnson | 50 | 548 | 11.0 | 3 |
| Chris Olave | 32 | 400 | 12.5 | 1 |
| Foster Moreau | 32 | 413 | 12.9 | 5 |
| Taysom Hill | 23 | 187 | 8.1 | 0 |
| Rashid Shaheed | 20 | 349 | 17.5 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Blake Grupe, 27-31 FGs, 31-33 PATs, 112 points
**TACKLES:** Demario Davis, 136; Pete Werner, 92
**SACKS:** Bryan Bresee, 7.5, 2 players tied with 5.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Paulson Adebo, 3; Tyrann Mathieu, 3

## OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**ROOKIE FOODIE** Rookie offensive lineman **Kelvin Banks Jr.** might've been the perfect fit to land in one of the best food cities in the world: While he was in college at Texas, Banks did a series on his Instagram where he toured all the best barbecue spots in Austin. He just might need to expand his horizons because New Orleans isn't known for its barbecue.

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KELVIN BANKS JR. INSTAGRAM

**BOWLING THEM OVER** J.T. Gray solidified his standing as one of the best special teams players in the NFL last season when he made a league-high 22 special teams tackles (10 solo, 12 assisted) in addition to blocking a punt. But his claim to fame in the Saints locker room may be his ability as a bowler. Gray says his personal best on the lanes is a 285, and he goes by the nickname "Kingpin."

**QB COACH** The most accomplished high school quarterback in the Saints organization might be head coach Kellen Moore. Though Moore grew up in a small town — Prosser, Washington's population was 6,062 in the 2020 U.S. Census — he lit up the scoreboards at Prosser High School. Moore threw for an astonishing 173 touchdowns in three years as a starter, including 67 in his senior season.

**COACHING LINEAGE** Speaking of Moore, he comes from a family of coaches. His grandfather, Thomas "Bert" Moore, was a first-generation Irish immigrant who coached one of the most successful high school basketball programs in Illinois (one of his athletes: sports executive Jerry Colangelo). His father, Tom Moore, is considered one of the best high school football coaches in the history of the state of Washington, having compiled a 234-38 record with four state titles. And his younger brother, Kirby, is the offensive coordinator at the University of Missouri.

## SCOUTING THE SAINTS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ORLEANS

"There's a very realistic scenario where the Saints start rookie quarterback Tyler Shough. Shough has some good qualities as far as accuracy, experience, arm and decent mobility, but starting a rookie is never a sure thing as far as immediate success. … Having Alvin Kamara and his multidimensional game softens the blow of having to go with a new quarterback. … Brandin Cooks still has 4.3 speed and is fairly healthy as he reunites with the team that drafted him. … Chris Olave's concussion history is concerning. … A lot of teams, including the Texans, wanted to trade up for left tackle Kelvin Banks Jr. The Saints weren't interested in picks. They wanted that player specifically, adding a consensus All-American, Outland Trophy and Lombardi Award winner to their line as an anchor on the left side. … From an interior tandem standpoint, Erik McCoy and Cesar Ruiz add a road-grading, stout presence at the line of scrimmage. … Chase Young is Chase Young again, and that's a great thing for this defense. … Carl Granderson has a lot of moves at his disposal. … Demario Davis is seemingly ageless. He's still got a lot of pop as a tackler. … Adding Justin Reid gives the Saints a legit hitter at strong safety and reunites him with his former Houston teammate, Tyrann Mathieu. … Between Kool-Aid McKinstry and Alontae Taylor, the Saints have two young corners with a lot of talent. … Bryan Bresee moves quite well for his size."

## 2025 SAINTS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 Haener, Jake | QB | 6-1 | 200 | 2 | Fresno State | D4b-23 | D4b-NO-23 |
| 18 Rattler, Spencer | QB | 6-0 | 211 | 1 | South Carolina | D5a-24 | D5a-NO-24 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 Edwards-Helaire, C. | RB | 5-7 | 207 | 5 | LSU | FA-24 | D1-KC-20 |
| 13 Jones Jr., Velus | RB | 6-0 | 200 | 3 | Tennessee | FA-Car-25 | D3-Chi-22 |
| 41 Kamara, Alvin | RB | 5-10 | 215 | 8 | Tennessee | D3a-17 | D3a-NO-17 |
| 5 Miller, Kendre | RB | 6-0 | 220 | 2 | TCU | D3-23 | D3-NO-23 |
| 33 Mims, Jordan | RB | 6-0 | 205 | 1 | Fresno State | FA-23 | FA-Buf-23 |
| 34 Valladay, Xazavian | RB | 6-0 | 198 | 1 | Arizona State | FA-24 | FA-Hou-23 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 81 Austin Jr., Kevin | WR | 6-2 | 200 | 1 | Notre Dame | FA-24 | FA-Jac-22 |
| 10 Cooks, Brandin | WR | 5-10 | 193 | 11 | Oregon State | FA-Dal-25 | D1-NO-14 |
| 7 Hill, Taysom | TE | 6-2 | 221 | 8 | BYU | W-GB-17 | FA-GB-17 |
| 85 Holker, Dallin | TE | 6-3 | 241 | 1 | Colorado State | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 86 Jacobson, Michael | TE | 6-7 | 244 | 1 | Iowa State | FA-23 | FA-Sea-21 |
| 83 Johnson, Juwan | TE | 6-4 | 231 | 5 | Oregon | FA-20 | FA-NO-20 |
| 16 Means, Bub | WR | 6-2 | 215 | 1 | Pitt | D5b-24 | D5b-NO-24 |
| 87 Moreau, Foster | TE | 6-4 | 250 | 6 | LSU | FA-LV-23 | D4c-LV-19 |
| 12 Olave, Chris | WR | 6-0 | 187 | 3 | Ohio State | D1a-22 | D1a-NO-22 |
| Peoples-Jones, D. | WR | 6-2 | 208 | 5 | Michigan | FA-25 | D6-Cle-20 |
| 17 Pettis, Dante | WR | 6-1 | 195 | 6 | Washington | FA-24 | D2-SF-18 |
| 22 Shaheed, Rashid | WR | 6-0 | 180 | 3 | Weber State | FA-22 | FA-NO-22 |
| 88 Stoll, Jack | TE | 6-4 | 247 | 4 | Nebraska | FA-Mia-25 | FA-Phi-21 |
| 84 Tipton, Mason | WR | 5-11 | 187 | 1 | Yale | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 82 Welch, Treyton | TE | 6-4 | 240 | 1 | Wyoming | FA-24 | FA-Cle-24 |
| 11 Wilson Jr., Cedrick | WR | 6-2 | 197 | 7 | Boise State | FA-Mia-24 | D6b-Dal-18 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 76 Clapp, Will | C/G | 6-5 | 311 | 7 | LSU | FA-Buf-25 | D7-NO-18 |
| 76 Deculus, Austin | T | 6-5 | 321 | 3 | LSU | FA-24 | D6-Hou-22 |
| 72 Ezirim, Josiah | T | 6-6 | 329 | 1 | Eastern Kentucky | D7-24 | D7-NO-24 |
| 75 Fuaga, Taliese | T | 6-6 | 324 | 1 | Oregon State | D1-24 | D1-NO-24 |
| 60 Hergel, Kyle | G | 6-2 | 315 | 1 | Boston College | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 78 McCoy, Erik | C/G | 6-4 | 303 | 6 | Texas A&M | D2-19 | D2-NO-19 |
| 70 Penning, Trevor | T | 6-7 | 325 | 3 | Northern Iowa | D1b-22 | D1b-NO-22 |
| 74 Radunz, Dillon | T | 6-6 | 301 | 4 | North Dakota State | FA-Ten-25 | D2-Ten-21 |
| 51 Ruiz, Cesar | C/G | 6-4 | 316 | 5 | Michigan | D1-20 | D1-NO-20 |
| 64 Saldiveri, Nick | OL | 6-6 | 316 | 2 | Old Dominion | D4a-23 | D4a-NO-23 |
| 67 Young, Landon | T | 6-7 | 321 | 4 | Kentucky | D6-21 | D6-NO-21 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 97 Boyd, Khristian | DT | 6-2 | 320 | 1 | Northern Iowa | D6-24 | D6-NO-24 |
| 90 Bresee, Bryan | DT | 6-5 | 305 | 2 | Clemson | D1-23 | D1-NO-23 |
| 55 Foskey, Isaiah | DE | 6-5 | 270 | 2 | Notre Dame | D2-23 | D2-NO-23 |
| 92 Godchaux, Davon | DT | 6-3 | 330 | 8 | LSU | T-NE-25 | D5b-Mia-17 |
| 96 Granderson, Carl | DE | 6-5 | 261 | 6 | Wyoming | FA-19 | FA-NO-19 |
| 59 Jeffcoat, Trajan | DE | 6-4 | 266 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 94 Jordan, Cameron | DE | 6-4 | 287 | 14 | California | D1a-11 | D1a-NO-11 |
| 95 Ridgeway III, John | DT | 6-5 | 321 | 3 | Arkansas | T-Was-24 | D5-Dal-22 |
| 98 Rumph II, Chris | DE | 6-2 | 244 | 4 | Duke | FA-LAC-25 | D4-LAC-21 |
| 50 Saunders, Khalen | DT | 6-0 | 324 | 6 | Western Illinois | FA-KC-23 | D3-KC-19 |
| 93 Shepherd, Nathan | DT | 6-4 | 315 | 7 | Fort Hays State | FA-NYJ-23 | D3-NYJ-18 |
| 54 Williams, Jonah | DE | 6-5 | 275 | 4 | Weber State | FA-Det-25 | FA-LAR-20 |
| 99 Young, Chase | DE | 6-5 | 265 | 5 | Ohio State | FA-SF-24 | D1-Was-20 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56 Davis, Demario | LB | 6-2 | 248 | 13 | Arkansas State | FA-NYJ-18 | D3-NYJ-12 |
| 53 Ford, Jaylan | LB | 6-2 | 240 | 1 | Texas | D5c-24 | D5c-NO-24 |
| 52 Jackson, D'Marco | LB | 6-1 | 233 | 3 | Appalachian State | D5-22 | D5-NO-22 |
| 45 Sewell, Nephi | LB | 6-0 | 228 | 2 | Utah | FA-22 | FA-NO-22 |
| 44 Stalbird, Isaiah | LB | 6-1 | 215 | 1 | South Dakota St. | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 20 Werner, Pete | LB | 6-3 | 242 | 4 | Ohio State | D2-21 | D2-NO-21 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Amadi, Ugo | S | 5-9 | 201 | 6 | Oregon | FA-KC-23 | D4-Sea-19 |
| Burgess, Terrell | S | 5-11 | 202 | 4 | Utah | FA-25 | D3-LAR-20 |
| 26 Fluellen, Travion | CB | 6-2 | 210 | 1 | Middle Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 48 Gray, J.T. | DB | 6-0 | 202 | 7 | Mississippi State | FA-18 | FA-NO-18 |
| 31 Howden, Jordan | DB | 6-0 | 209 | 2 | Minnesota | D5-23 | D5-NO-23 |
| 32 Mathieu, Tyrann | S | 5-9 | 190 | 12 | LSU | FA-KC-22 | D3-Ari-13 |
| 14 McKinstry, Kool-Aid | CB | 5-11 | 199 | 1 | Alabama | D2-24 | D2-NO-24 |
| 36 Payton, Rico | CB | 6-0 | 182 | 1 | Pittsburg State | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 21 Reid, Justin | S | 6-1 | 207 | 7 | Stanford | FA-KC-25 | D3a-Hou-18 |
| 1 Taylor, Alontae | CB | 6-1 | 199 | 3 | Tennessee | D2-22 | D2-NO-22 |
| 28 Wright, Rejzohn | CB | 6-2 | 193 | 1 | Oregon State | FA-24 | FA-Car-23 |
| 27 Yiadom, Isaac | CB | 6-1 | 188 | 7 | Boston College | FA-SF-25 | D3-Den-18 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19 Grupe, Blake | K | 5-7 | 156 | 2 | Notre Dame | FA-23 | FA-NO-23 |
| 43 Hayball, Matthew | P | 6-0 | 189 | 1 | Vanderbilt | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 39 Smyth, Charlie | K | 6-4 | 210 | 1 | None | FA-24 | FA-NO-24 |
| 49 Wood, Zach | LS | 6-3 | 255 | 8 | SMU | FA-17 | FA-Dal-16 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 12 | Chris Olave | 11 | Cedrick Wilson Jr. |
| WR | 22 | Rashid Shaheed | 16 | Bub Means |
| WR | 10 | Brandin Cooks | 17 | Dante Pettis |
| LT | 75 | Taliese Fuaga | 71 | Kelvin Banks Jr. (R) |
| LG | 71 | Kelvin Banks Jr. (R) | 64 | Nick Saldiveri |
| C | 78 | Erik McCoy | 76 | Will Clapp |
| RG | 51 | Cesar Ruiz | 74 | Dillon Radunz |
| RT | 70 | Trevor Penning | 67 | Landon Young |
| TE | 83 | Juwan Johnson | 87 | Foster Moreau |
| QB | 6 | Tyler Shough (R) | 18 | Spencer Rattler |
| RB | 41 | Alvin Kamara | 5 | Kendre Miller |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 96 | Carl Granderson | 98 | Chris Rumph II |
| DT | 92 | Davon Godchaux | 93 | Nathan Shepherd |
| DE | 94 | Cameron Jordan | 55 | Isaiah Foskey |
| EDGE | 99 | Chase Young | 40 | Fadil Diggs (R) |
| MLB | 56 | Demario Davis | 47 | Danny Stutsman (R) |
| WLB | 20 | Pete Werner | 45 | Nephi Sewell |
| CB | 14 | Kool-Aid McKinstry | 36 | Rico Payton |
| CB | 27 | Isaac Yiadom | 29 | Quincy Riley (R) |
| NB | 1 | Alontae Taylor | 0 | Ugo Amadi |
| SS | 21 | Justin Reid | 33 | Jonas Sanker (R) |
| FS | 32 | Tyrann Mathieu | 31 | Jordan Howden |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 19 | Blake Grupe | KR | 22 | Rashid Shaheed |
| P | 43 | Matthew Hayball | PR | 22 | Rashid Shaheed |

**4.9**

The Saints allowed 4.9 yards per rush to opposing offenses, the second-highest mark in the league behind only the Panthers (5.2).

## SAINTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kelvin Banks Jr. | OT | 6-5 | 315 | Texas |
| 2 | Tyler Shough | QB | 6-5 | 219 | Louisville |
| 3 | Vernon Broughton | DT | 6-5 | 311 | Texas |
| 3 | Jonas Sanker | S | 6-1 | 211 | Virginia |
| 4 | Danny Stutsman | LB | 6-3 | 233 | Oklahoma |
| 4 | Quincy Riley | CB | 5-11 | 195 | Louisville |
| 6 | Devin Neal | RB | 5-11 | 213 | Kansas |
| 7 | Moliki Matavao | TE | 6-8 | 263 | UCLA |
| 7 | Fadil Diggs | DE | 6-4 | 257 | Syracuse |

The Saints shored up any lingering questions about their offensive line by selecting Kelvin Banks Jr. ninth overall, giving them four first-rounders and a second-rounder in their projected starting five. It's not yet clear whether Banks will play guard or tackle, but he almost certainly will start. The most interesting pick, though, is Louisville quarterback Tyler Shough, who may be in line to be a Week 1 starting quarterback for new head coach Kellen Moore. Vernon Broughton, Jonas Sanker and Danny Stutsman should all help solidify what was an atrocious run defense in 2024, and Quincy Riley could pay off in a big way if he's able to solidify a starting spot in a suddenly weak secondary.

# BUCCANEERS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Sept. 15 | at Houston | 7:00 |
| Sept. 21 | N.Y. Jets | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Oct. 5 | at Seattle | 4:05 |
| Oct. 12 | San Francisco | 1:00 |
| Oct. 20 | at Detroit | 7:00 |
| Oct. 26 | at New Orleans | 4:05 |
| Nov. 2 | BYE | |
| Nov. 9 | New England | 1:00 |
| Nov. 16 | at Buffalo | 1:00 |
| Nov. 23 | at L.A. Rams | 8:20 |
| Nov. 30 | Arizona | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Dec. 11 | Atlanta | 8:15 |
| Dec. 21 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Dec. 28 | at Miami | 1:00 |
| TBD | Carolina | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 11 |
| 2021 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 13 |
| 2022 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 8 |
| 2023 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 9 |
| 2024 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Todd Bowles
**Record With Team:** 27-24
**Career Record:** 53-65
**Offensive Coordinator:** Josh Grizzard
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Thomas McGaughey
**Quarterbacks:** Thaddeus Lewis
**Running Backs:** Skip Peete
**Wide Receivers:** Bryan McClendon
**Tight Ends:** Justin Peelle
**Offensive Line:** Brian Picucci
**Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line:** Kevin Carberry
**Offensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Kefense Hynson
**Senior Offensive Assistant:** Tom Moore
**Defensive Line:** Charlie Strong
**Inside Linebackers:** Mike Caldwell
**Run Game Coordinator/Outside Linebackers:** Larry Foote
**Defensive Pass Game Coordinator:** George Edwards
**Cornerbacks:** Kevin Ross
**Safeties:** Nick Rapone

NFC SOUTH FORECAST
1

Death, taxes and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers winning the NFC South. It sure feels that way, as the Bucs took home the division crown for the fourth year in a row in 2024, maintaining the NFC's longest active streak with five straight playoff appearances by overcoming some critical injuries and a four-game losing streak. They are poised to be the division favorites in 2025, with most of last year's starting lineup returning. Key veteran free agents like wide receiver Chris Godwin and linebacker Lavonte David signed new contracts, and the entire starting offense returns for a unit that ranked in the top five in both rushing and passing last season.

Continuity has been king in Tampa Bay, and even after losing offensive coordinator Liam Coen to the Jacksonville Jaguars, the Bucs kept most of his staff in-house, promoting Josh Grizzard to the top play-calling job. Head coach Todd Bowles has won the division every year since taking over for Bruce Arians, and he's in position to do it again.

## OFFENSE

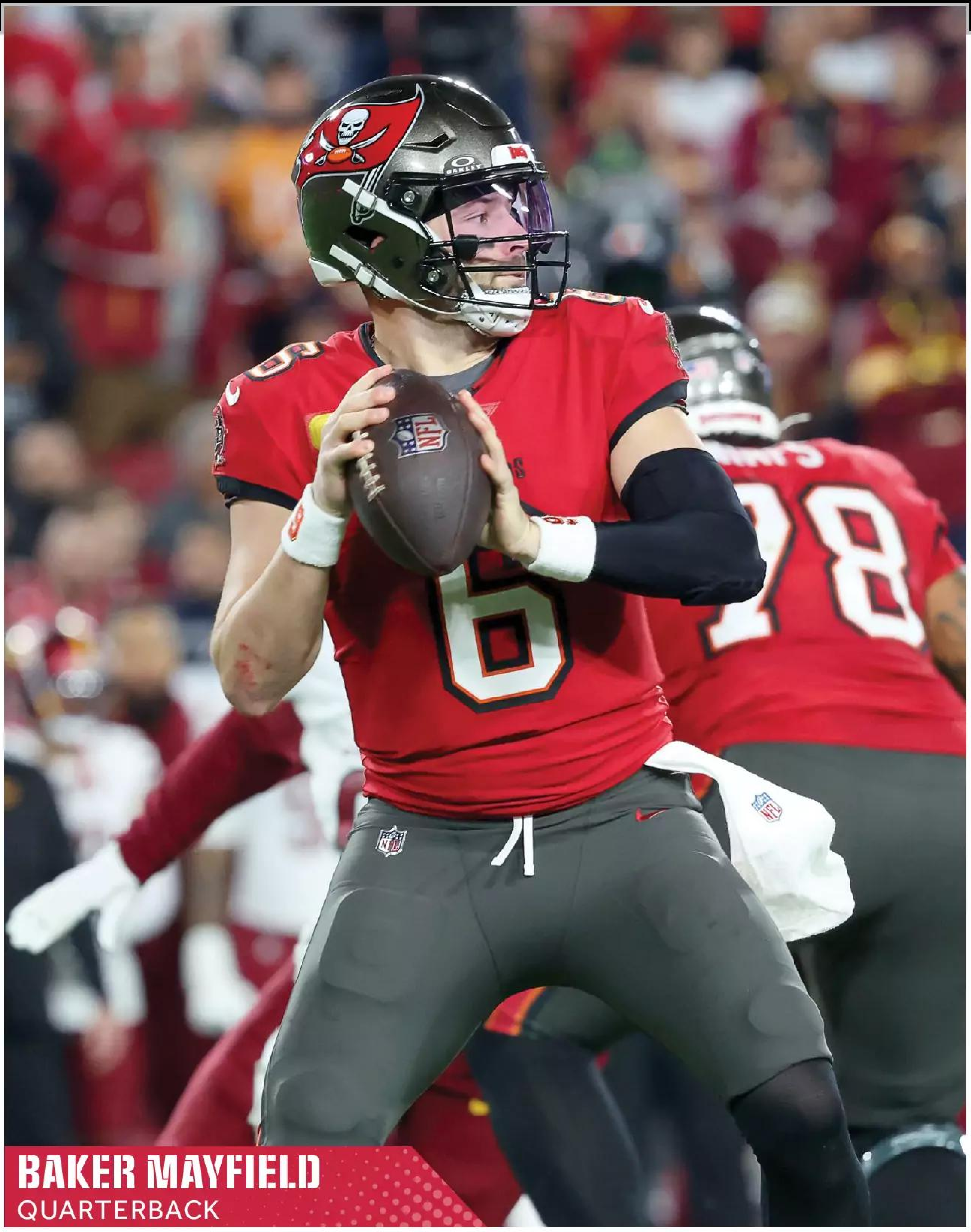
After enjoying a career year in 2024, quarterback Baker Mayfield is back to lead a Bucs offense that returns every single starter from last year's top-five unit. Future Hall of Fame wide receiver Mike Evans is back for a 12th season, and while Godwin will be working his way back from a season-ending ankle injury, the Bucs gave him a hefty three-year contract extension as a vote of confidence in his ability to return to full strength and Pro Bowl form. Wideout Jalen McMillan finished his rookie season strong in Godwin's stead last year, catching seven touchdown passes over the final five games of the regular season. That loaded group didn't stop the Bucs from spending their first-round pick in the 2025 NFL Draft on Ohio State's Emeka Egbuka, who should immediately give Tampa Bay arguably the best four-man receiver group in the NFL. The entire tight end room is back from last season, too, led by a reliable target in Cade Otton.

The offensive line is anchored by left tackle Tristan Wirfs, who earned first-team All-Pro honors last year for the second time in his five-year career, becoming the first player in NFL history to garner that accolade at both left and right tackle in different seasons. Left guard Ben Bredeson earned a new three-year deal and a solid raise after playing well on a cheaper one-year deal last year, and the rest of the unit is full of young talent — second-year center Graham Barton (last year's first-round pick), right guard Cody Mauch and right tackle Luke Goedeke.

That unit in the trenches helped Tampa Bay improve from one of the league's worst rushing offenses over the previous two seasons to one of the best, creating more space to work for running backs Bucky Irving and Rachaad White. White entered last season as the starter, with the rookie Irving in a relief role, but Irving's explosiveness and big-play ability flipped that script by the end of the year, and White is likely to be the change-of-pace back in 2025. Former undrafted free agent Sean Tucker showed flashes of potential in limited action last year as well and brings a valuable element of power and physicality that rounds out one of the league's best backfields.

## DEFENSE

Despite having a defensively minded head coach in Bowles, it's Tampa Bay's lack of consistency and depth on that side of the ball that has been their biggest



KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

struggle during his tenure. The first order of business will be improving a pass rush that failed to get consistent pressure on opposing quarterbacks without sending extra rushers, which exposed a back seven that didn't have the depth to overcome multiple injuries throughout the year. The Bucs are hoping that the offseason addition of veteran free-agent outside linebacker Haason Reddick will provide a boost in that area, along with the development of young linebackers Yaya Diaby and Chris Braswell.

At 347 pounds, Vita Vea anchors the Bucs' solid run defense as one of the league's most dominant nose tackles, while tackle Calijah Kancey provides the lightning to Vea's thunder as a disruptive interior presence against both the run and pass. Logan Hall showed flashes of improvement last season, and if Hall can build on that success, it would be a huge win for the Tampa Bay defense this season.

David should have a gold jacket waiting for him at the end of his career, but it'll have to wait another year, as the longtime stalwart signed another one-year deal to lead the Tampa Bay defense in the middle. The Bucs are hopeful that third-year linebacker SirVocea Dennis can finally stay healthy and lock down the other inside linebacker spot alongside David, but veteran Anthony Walker Jr. will improve the depth behind him after signing in free agency.

The majority of the secondary is back from last season, led by All-Pro safety Antoine Winfield Jr. on the back end. After spending time at both safety and in the slot/nickel role as a rookie, Tykee Smith is likely to settle in full time next to Winfield as the last line of defense, giving Bowles another versatile playmaker he can move around the defense. Smith's permanent move to safety will likely be made easier by the Bucs double-dipping on cornerbacks early in the 2025 NFL Draft, spending back-to-back Day 2 picks on Benjamin Morrison and Jacob Parrish. Both have proven they can play both outside and in the slot, but Morrison is likely to push returning starters Jamel Dean and Zyon McCollum for one of the starting jobs on the outside, while Parrish could supplant incumbent veteran Christian Izien for the slot/nickel spot. Dean has been solid when healthy, but nagging injuries have kept him off the field far too often, while McCollum made a giant leap in this third season and is primed to assert himself as the Bucs' top cover man.

## SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Chase McLaughlin remains a source of comfort for the Bucs, having converted 59 of his 63 field-goal attempts over the past two seasons (93.7%). On the other side of the spectrum, Tampa Bay has struggled to find consistency and reliability in the punting game, which led them to sign veteran Riley Dixon in free agency this offseason. Evan Deckers missed a decent chunk of last season but is back to handle the long-snapping duties this year.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

Few teams in the NFL have enjoyed the level of continuity that Tampa Bay brings to the table yet again this season, and the Bucs' track record of success speaks for itself. The goal in 2025 will be to raise that floor of being the perennial No. 4 seed in the playoffs as the NFC South champs to a ceiling that challenges for an NFC title game appearance or potential Super Bowl run. If the pass rush improves and the defense can create more big plays and takeaways, and the offense can avoid the devastating injuries to key players that plagued it during its worst stretches in 2024, there's reason to believe Mayfield can lead the Bucs to those heights. Keeping their offensive scheme intact despite changing coordinators yet again could be the most underrated reason why the Bucs will be a championship contender in 2025.

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Washington | W | 37-20 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Detroit | W | 20-16 |
| Sept. | 22 | Denver | L | 7-26 |
| Sept. | 29 | Philadelphia | W | 33-16 |
| Oct. | 3 | at Atlanta (ot) | L | 30-36 |
| Oct. | 13 | at New Orleans | W | 51-27 |
| Oct. | 21 | Baltimore | L | 31-41 |
| Oct. | 27 | Atlanta | L | 26-31 |
| Nov. | 4 | at Kansas City (ot) | L | 24-30 |
| Nov. | 10 | San Francisco | L | 20-23 |
| Nov. | 24 | at N.Y. Giants | W | 30-7 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Carolina (ot) | W | 26-23 |
| Dec. | 8 | Las Vegas | W | 28-13 |
| Dec. | 15 | at L.A. Chargers | W | 40-17 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Dallas | L | 24-26 |
| Dec. | 29 | Carolina | W | 48-14 |
| Jan. | 5 | New Orleans | W | 27-19 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 12 | Washington | L | 20-23 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 399.6 | 3 | 2 |
| Rushing | 149.2 | 4 | 3 |
| Passing | 250.4 | 3 | 2 |
| Scoring | 29.5 | 4 | 2 |
| Third Down % | 50.9 | 1 | 1 |
| Points/Play | 0.459 | 4 | 2 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 341.8 | 18 | 7 |
| Rushing | 97.8 | 4 | 2 |
| Passing | 243.9 | 29 | 15 |
| Scoring | 22.6 | 16 | 8 |
| Interceptions | 7 | T26 | T14 |
| Sacks | 46 | T6 | 3 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.360 | 16 | 8 |
| TO Differential | -5 | T20 | T10 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baker Mayfield | 570 | 407 | 4,500 | 41 | 16 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bucky Irving | 207 | 1,122 | 5.4 | 8 |
| Rachaad White | 144 | 613 | 4.3 | 3 |
| Baker Mayfield | 60 | 378 | 6.3 | 3 |
| Sean Tucker | 50 | 308 | 6.2 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mike Evans | 74 | 1,004 | 13.6 | 11 |
| Cade Otton | 59 | 600 | 10.2 | 4 |
| Rachaad White | 51 | 393 | 7.7 | 6 |
| Chris Godwin | 50 | 576 | 11.5 | 5 |
| Bucky Irving | 47 | 392 | 8.3 | 0 |
| Jalen McMillan | 37 | 461 | 12.5 | 8 |

**KICKING:** Chase McLaughlin, 30-32 FGs, 54-56 PATs, 144 points
**TACKLES:** Lavonte David, 122; Zyon McCollum, 82
**SACKS:** Calijah Kancey, 7.5; Vita Vea, 7.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Zyon McCollum, 2; Tykee Smith, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**MR. 1,000** Despite missing a month with a hamstring injury last season, **Mike Evans** still managed to top 1,000 yards for the 11th straight season, tying him with Jerry Rice for the most consecutive 1,000-yard receiving seasons in NFL history. Evans eclipsed the mark in dramatic fashion on the final play of the regular season, and he also eclipsed 100 career touchdown catches.

KIM KLEMENT NEITZEL-IMAGN IMAGES

**LIFE AFTER BRADY** When Tom Brady retired after three seasons in Tampa Bay, the Bucs were expected by many to go into rebuilding mode after three straight playoff appearances and a Super Bowl win. Instead, they kept the train rolling with Mayfield at the helm, extending their streak to five straight postseason berths and four straight division titles.

**AGELESS WONDER** Much like Evans, Lavonte David continues to hold off Father Time to a mystifying degree. He proved last season to still be one of the best off-ball linebackers in the NFL despite playing in his 13th pro campaign at 34 years old. He's back for more after signing another one-year deal this offseason, and he will continue to boost his Hall of Fame case in 2025.

**OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE SCALE** In the seventh round of this year's draft, the Bucs selected Oregon wide receiver Tez Johnson, who is now the lightest player in the NFL at just 154 pounds. Then, they signed Florida defensive lineman Desmond Watson as an undrafted free agent, who is now the heaviest player in the league at his listed weight of 464 pounds.

# SCOUTING THE BUCCANEERS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TAMPA BAY

"Baker Mayfield doesn't have a chip on his shoulder. It's more like a boulder. The way Mayfield uses slights, real or perceived, fuels him in a unique way. How Mayfield has turned around his career in Tampa Bay is a testament to his perseverance and how the Buccaneers have utilized him. … Mayfield doesn't lack for downfield targets. This is an outstanding receiving corps. Mike Evans is a future Hall of Fame selection. … Chris Godwin makes a ton of plays and is very hard to cover. … Emeka Egbuka is an unusually polished rookie receiver. … The Buccaneers are spending a lot of money on left tackle Tristan Wirfs. And they won't mind doing so because he's that good. … The Buccaneers are a passing team and don't have the strongest running back group. … Cody Mauch is a gritty former small-school standout and proof that NFL teams can find quality linemen at all levels. … Vita Vea, especially when his weight is right, is a force inside. … Logan Hall and Calijah Kancey aren't easy outs as pass-rushers. … Lavonte David just keeps going, year after year, tackle after tackle. He's tireless. … When Antoine Winfield Jr. is on the field, this defense is a lot more special. … Adding Benjamin Morrison, an accomplished cover guy at Notre Dame, gives this secondary the cornerback they needed to go with Jamel Dean and Zyon McCollum. It won't be long before Morrison is on the field with the first-team defense. … There are concerns about a lack of proven depth on their defense at all three levels."

## 2025 BUCCANEERS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Mayfield, Baker | QB | 6-1 | 215 | 7 | Oklahoma | FA-LAR-23 | D1a-Cle-18 |
| 11 | Pratt, Michael | QB | 6-2 | 217 | 1 | Tulane | FA-24 | D7-GB-24 |
| 2 | Trask, Kyle | QB | 6-5 | 236 | 4 | Florida | D2-21 | D2-TB-21 |

| RUNNING BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Irving, Bucky | RB | 5-10 | 195 | 1 | Oregon | D4-24 | D4-TB-24 |
| 44 | Tucker, Sean | RB | 5-10 | 205 | 2 | Syracuse | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 1 | White, Rachaad | RB | 6-0 | 214 | 3 | Arizona State | D3-22 | D3-TB-22 |
| 30 | Williams, DJ | RB | 6-0 | 225 | 1 | Arizona | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |

| RECEIVERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 82 | Culp, Devin | TE | 6-4 | 237 | 1 | Washington | D7-24 | D7-TB-24 |
| 87 | Durham, Payne | TE | 6-5 | 255 | 2 | Purdue | D5b-23 | D5b-TB-23 |
| 13 | Evans, Mike | WR | 6-5 | 231 | 11 | Texas A&M | D1-14 | D1-TB-14 |
| 14 | Godwin, Chris | WR | 6-1 | 209 | 8 | Penn State | D3a-17 | D3a-TB-17 |
| 89 | Houston, Dennis | WR | 6-1 | 190 | 1 | Western Illinois | FA-24 | FA-Dal-22 |
| 18 | Jarrett, Rakim | WR | 6-0 | 192 | 2 | Maryland | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 19 | Johnson, Kameron | WR | 5-10 | 170 | 1 | Barton | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |
| 41 | Kieft, Ko | TE | 6-5 | 265 | 3 | Minnesota | D6-22 | D6-TB-22 |
| 15 | McMillan, Jalen | WR | 6-1 | 192 | 1 | Washington | D3b-24 | D3b-TB-24 |
| 81 | Miller, Ryan | WR | 6-2 | 221 | 1 | Furman | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 88 | Otton, Cade | TE | 6-5 | 247 | 3 | Washington | D4a-22 | D4a-TB-22 |
| 10 | Palmer, Trey | WR | 6-1 | 190 | 2 | Nebraska | D6b-23 | D6b-TB-23 |
| 17 | Shepard, Sterling | WR | 5-10 | 198 | 9 | Oklahoma | FA-NYG-24 | D2-NYG-16 |
| 84 | Taula, Tanner | TE | 6-6 | 255 | 1 | Illinois State | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 83 | Thompson, Cody | WR | 6-2 | 205 | 3 | Toledo | FA-24 | FA-KC-19 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 62 | Barton, Graham | C | 6-5 | 314 | 1 | Duke | D1-24 | D1-TB-24 |
| 68 | Bredeson, Ben | G | 6-5 | 315 | 5 | Michigan | FA-NYG-24 | D4-Bal-20 |
| 61 | Dzansi, Silas | T | 6-5 | 335 | 1 | Virginia Tech | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 67 | Goedeke, Luke | T | 6-5 | 312 | 3 | Central Michigan | D2b-22 | D2b-TB-22 |
| 74 | Greenfield, Garret | OL | 6-6 | 310 | 1 | South Dakota St. | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |
| 72 | Haggard, Luke | OL | 6-7 | 305 | 1 | Indiana | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 77 | Heck, Charlie | T | 6-8 | 311 | 5 | North Carolina | FA-SF-25 | D4-Hou-20 |
| 79 | Klein, Elijah | G | 6-4 | 319 | 1 | UTEP | D6-24 | D6-TB-24 |
| 69 | Mauch, Cody | G | 6-6 | 303 | 2 | North Dakota St. | D2-23 | D2-TB-23 |
| 71 | Metz, Lorenz | OL | 6-9 | 310 | 1 | Cincinnati | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |
| 75 | O'Neal, Raiqwon | OL | 6-4 | 305 | 1 | UCLA | FA-24 | FA-TB-23 |
| 76 | Opeta, Sua | G | 6-4 | 305 | 5 | Weber State | FA-Phi-24 | FA-Phi-19 |
| 78 | Wirfs, Tristan | T | 6-5 | 320 | 5 | Iowa | D1-20 | D1-TB-20 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95 | Brewer, C.J. | DL | 6-2 | 290 | 1 | Coastal Carolina | FA-23 | FA-Buf-22 |
| 96 | Gaines, Greg | DL | 6-1 | 312 | 6 | Washington | FA-LAR-23 | D4-LAR-19 |
| 97 | Gotsis, Adam | DL | 6-4 | 290 | 9 | Georgia Tech | FA-25 | D2-Den-16 |
| 91 | Greene, Mike | DL | 6-3 | 293 | 2 | James Madison | FA-22 | FA-TB-22 |
| 90 | Hall, Logan | DL | 6-6 | 283 | 3 | Houston | D2a-22 | D2a-TB-22 |
| 94 | Kancey, Calijah | DL | 6-0 | 280 | 2 | Pitt | D1-23 | D1-TB-23 |
| 50 | Vea, Vita | NT | 6-4 | 347 | 7 | Washington | D1-18 | D1-TB-18 |

| LINEBACKERS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43 | Braswell Jr., Chris | OLB | 6-3 | 255 | 1 | Alabama | D2-24 | D2-TB-24 |
| 54 | David, Lavonte | LB | 6-1 | 233 | 13 | Nebraska | D2-12 | D2-TB-12 |
| 8 | Dennis, SirVocea | LB | 6-0 | 230 | 2 | Pitt | D5a-23 | D5a-TB-23 |
| 0 | Diaby, Yaya | OLB | 6-4 | 270 | 2 | Louisville | D3-23 | D3-TB-23 |
| 48 | Grier Jr., Antonio | LB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | Arkansas | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |
| 45 | Jones, Deion | LB | 6-1 | 222 | 9 | LSU | FA-24 | D2-Atl-16 |
| 98 | Nelson, Anthony | OLB | 6-7 | 271 | 6 | Iowa | D4-19 | D4-TB-19 |
| 33 | Ramirez, Jose | OLB | 6-2 | 252 | 1 | Eastern Michigan | D6c-23 | D6c-TB-23 |
| 5 | Reddick, Haason | OLB | 6-1 | 240 | 7 | Temple | FA-NYJ-25 | D1-Ari-17 |
| 3 | Walker Jr., Anthony | LB | 6-1 | 235 | 8 | Northwestern | FA-Mia-25 | D5-Ind-17 |
| 58 | Watts, Markees | OLB | 6-1 | 240 | 2 | Charlotte | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | Banks, Marcus | S | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | Mississippi State | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |
| 35 | Dean, Jamel | CB | 6-1 | 206 | 6 | Auburn | D3a-19 | D3a-TB-19 |
| 24 | Funderburk, Tyrek | CB | 6-0 | 185 | 1 | Appalachian State | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |
| 34 | Hall, Bryce | CB | 6-1 | 202 | 5 | Virginia | FA-NYJ-24 | D5-NYJ-20 |
| 32 | Hayes, Josh | DB | 6-0 | 190 | 2 | Kansas State | D6a-23 | D6a-TB-23 |
| 29 | Izien, Christian | S | 5-10 | 200 | 2 | Rutgers | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 27 | McCollum, Zyon | CB | 6-2 | 199 | 3 | Sam Houston | D5-22 | D5-TB-22 |
| 26 | Merriweather, Kaevon | S | 6-0 | 212 | 2 | Iowa | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| 23 | Smith, Tykee | S | 5-10 | 202 | 1 | Georgia | D3a-24 | D3a-TB-24 |
| 22 | Vildor, Kindle | CB | 5-11 | 189 | 5 | Georgia Southern | FA-Det-25 | D5-Chi-20 |
| 31 | Winfield Jr., Antoine | S | 5-9 | 203 | 5 | Minnesota | D2-20 | D2-TB-20 |
| 38 | Wisdom, Rashad | S | 5-9 | 210 | 1 | UTSA | FA-24 | FA-TB-24 |

| SPECIALISTS | | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 86 | Deckers, Evan | LS | 6-3 | 252 | 1 | Duke | FA-23 | FA-TB-23 |
| | Dixon, Riley | P | 6-4 | 221 | 9 | Syracuse | FA-Den-25 | D7-Den-16 |
| 16 | Julien, Jake | P | 6-2 | 217 | 1 | Eastern Michigan | FA-25 | FA-NE-22 |
| 4 | McLaughlin, Chase | K | 6-0 | 190 | 6 | Illinois | FA-Ind-23 | FA-Buf-19 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 13 | Mike Evans | 9 | Emeka Egbuka (R) |
| WR | 14 | Chris Godwin | 10 | Trey Palmer |
| WR | 15 | Jalen McMillan | 17 | Sterling Shepard |
| LT | 78 | Tristan Wirfs | 77 | Charlie Heck |
| LG | 68 | Ben Bredeson | 76 | Sua Opeta |
| C | 62 | Graham Barton | 65 | Jake Majors (R) |
| RG | 69 | Cody Mauch | 79 | Elijah Klein |
| RT | 67 | Luke Goedeke | 74 | Garret Greenfield |
| TE | 88 | Cade Otton | 87 | Payne Durham |
| QB | 6 | Baker Mayfield | 2 | Kyle Trask |
| RB | 7 | Bucky Irving | 1 | Rachaad White |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 90 | Logan Hall | 95 | C.J. Brewer |
| NT | 50 | Vita Vea | 96 | Greg Gaines |
| DT | 94 | Calijah Kancey | 95 | Elijah Roberts (R) |
| OLB | 5 | Haason Reddick | 43 | Chris Braswell Jr. |
| ILB | 54 | Lavonte David | 3 | Anthony Walker Jr. |
| ILB | 8 | SirVocea Dennis | 45 | Deion Jones |
| OLB | 0 | Yaya Diaby | 98 | Anthony Nelson |
| CB | 27 | Zyon McCollum | 21 | Benjamin Morrison (R) |
| CB | 35 | Jamel Dean | 34 | Bryce Hall |
| SS | 23 | Tykee Smith | 39 | Marcus Banks |
| FS | 31 | Antoine Winfield Jr. | 26 | Kaevon Merriweather |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 4 | Chase McLaughlin | KR | 44 | Sean Tucker |
| P | 92 | Riley Dixon | PR | 83 | Tez Johnson (R) |

**5.3**

Tampa Bay ran for 5.3 yards per attempt in 2024, the third-highest mark in the league, after averaging a league-low 3.4 yards per carry in 2023.

## BUCS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Emeka Egbuka | WR | 6-0 | 202 | Ohio State |
| 2 | Benjamin Morrison | CB | 6-0 | 193 | Notre Dame |
| 3 | Jacob Parrish | CB | 5-9 | 191 | Kansas State |
| 4 | David Walker | OLB | 6-0 | 263 | Central Arkansas |
| 5 | Elijah Roberts | DL | 6-3 | 285 | SMU |
| 7 | Tez Johnson | WR | 5-9 | 154 | Oregon |

Emeka Egbuka was a luxury pick in the first round, but he's a pro-ready player with a high floor who will force his way onto the field early and give the Bucs insurance as Chris Godwin works his way back from injury. Benjamin Morrison is coming off a season-ending injury of his own, but fully healthy, he should push Jamel Dean and Zyon McCollum for starter reps on the outside, while Jacob Parrish should be the early favorite to win the slot/nickel job. David Walker and Elijah Roberts should provide an immediate boost to a lackluster pass rush, while Tez Johnson was a high-upside value pick who could be Tampa Bay's new punt returner from Day 1 while providing more quality depth for the receiver room.

# CARDINALS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Sept. 14 | Carolina | 4:05 |
| Sept. 21 | at San Francisco | 4:25 |
| Sept. 25 | Seattle | 8:15 |
| Oct. 5 | Tennessee | 4:05 |
| Oct. 12 | at Indianapolis | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Green Bay | 4:25 |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 3 | at Dallas | 8:15 |
| Nov. 9 | at Seattle | 4:05 |
| Nov. 16 | San Francisco | 4:05 |
| Nov. 23 | Jacksonville | 4:05 |
| Nov. 30 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | L.A. Rams | 4:25 |
| Dec. 14 | at Houston | 1:00 |
| Dec. 21 | Atlanta | 4:05 |
| TBD | at Cincinnati | |
| TBD | at L.A. Rams | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 | 8 |
| 2021 NFC PLAYOFFS | 11 |
| 2022 | 4 |
| 2023 | 4 |
| 2024 | 8 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Jonathan Gannon
**Record With Team:** 12-22
**Career Record:** 12-22
**Offensive Coordinator:** Drew Petzing
**Defensive Coordinator:** Nick Rallis
**Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator:** Jeff Rodgers
**Quarterbacks:** Israel Woolfork
**Running Backs:** Autry Denson
**Passing Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers:** Drew Terrell
**Pass Game Specialist:** Connor Senger
**Tight Ends:** Ben Steele
**Offensive Line:** Justin Frye
**Defensive Line:** Winston DeLattiboudere III
**Linebackers:** Cristian Garcia
**Outside Linebackers:** Matt Feeney
**Defensive Backs:** Patrick Toney
**Cornerbacks:** Ryan Smith

NFC WEST FORECAST

4

Every team feels optimistic during the offseason, but for Cardinals fans, the excitement is well founded. Since head coach Jonathan Gannon and general manager Monti Ossenfort took over in 2023, there has been steady growth. The first step was to develop an identity and culture. Check. Then, they had to comb through and reshape the roster. Also check.

The third season is when the grace period for a new regime subsides. Optimism is great, but it can only take a team — and a fan base that has eagerly awaited a deep playoff run for nearly a decade — so far.

## OFFENSE

The Cardinals are largely running it back offensively in 2025. It was a quiet free agency, as the unit did not receive any major upgrades. However, just because the players are mostly the same, it doesn't mean the offense will have the same results as in 2024.

Quarterback Kyler Murray remains at the center of the conversation. Truthfully, there is no player more exciting to watch when he is in a zone than the No. 1 pick in the 2019 NFL Draft.

Murray admitted after the 2024 season that his knee was still affecting him, which could explain his career-low 4.6 rushes per game. Now two years removed from his surgery, Murray must use his dual-threat ability to open up the offense more. He has weapons galore.

Following back-to-back 1,000-plus-yard rushing seasons, James Conner, 30, keeps defying the stereotype surrounding running backs. The Cardinals had 73 rushes of longer than 10 yards, fourth-most in the league. With the majority of the offensive line returning intact and left tackle Paris Johnson Jr. playing the same position in consecutive seasons for the first time since high school, the Cardinals are hoping for more rushing success.

The Cardinals love their tight ends, playing in 12 or 13 personnel on 47% of their offensive snaps. Fourth-year tight end Trey McBride briefly became the highest-paid tight end in NFL history before George Kittle passed him by $100,000. McBride became a Pro Bowler in 2024 with 1,146 yards on 111 receptions. Offensive coordinator Drew Petzing needs to create plays to get the tight ends into the end zone more often than last season. McBride set the NFL record for most receptions (97) before scoring a touchdown.

Wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr. showed flashes during his rookie season, ending with 885 yards and tying the franchise rookie record shared by Larry Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin with eight touchdowns. Still, it was clear that Harrison and Murray were not always on the same page. That connection will need to sharpen in 2025, particularly on designed routes for Harrison and on off-schedule plays. Harrison reportedly gained muscle during the offseason, which will be beneficial in 50-50 situations. There were moments when he'd catch with his chest and allow defenders to swat it away rather than catching with his hands.

## DEFENSE

The happiest person in the Cardinals facility must be defensive coordinator Nick Rallis after a front seven overhaul in free agency. The Cardinals signed premier edge rusher Josh Sweat, whose best seasons came when Gannon was his defensive coordinator in Philadelphia. Sweat had a career-high 11 sacks in 2022

**MARVIN HARRISON JR.**
WIDE RECEIVER

JEFFREY BECKER-IMAGN IMAGES

and a Pro Bowl nod in 2021. Philly's disruptive defensive line was instrumental in Sweat's success, and it's something Rallis is looking to replicate.

With a similar blueprint, Ossenfort heavily invested in revamping the defensive line room, signing Dalvin Tomlinson and 18-year veteran Calais Campbell. They'll be monumental, not only on the field but also for the development of 2025 first-rounder Walter Nolen III and 2024 first-rounder Darius Robinson. Nolen joins the Cards after an All-America campaign at Ole Miss.

Rallis prefers a rotation with the front seven to keep the big guys fresh. With a crowded defensive line and outside linebacker room, the challenge becomes divvying up snap totals and deciding how often to blitz. Sweat headlines the outside linebackers unit, which also includes Baron Browning, BJ Ojulari (coming off an ACL tear) and Zaven Collins. Potentially shifting to a 4-3 defense would allow more bodies to clog the lanes, clearing the way for Sweat and Co. to come off the edge.

The secondary is Gannon's specialty, and the addition of Will Johnson in the draft could be a steal. Johnson had first-round grades, but injury concerns contributed to his slide into the second round. If healthy, he is the perfect cornerback to start on the outside. He'll compete with Starling Thomas V and 2024 second-rounder Max Melton to start opposite Sean Murphy-Bunting. Garrett Williams is also a rising star as a lockdown nickel cornerback.

Inside linebacker is the biggest unknown. With Kyzir White gone, there's a hole at Mike linebacker. Fourth-rounder Cody Simon ran the show at Ohio State and is a candidate for the role, as are Mack Wilson Sr. and Akeem Davis-Gaither. It's an important position in Rallis' defense, one that features plenty of disguises.

Whether he's deep in coverage or blitzing at the line of scrimmage, Budda Baker continues to deploy in multiple facets. He had the most tackles by a safety last season with 164, a total that ranked second in the NFL. His production remains prodigious, and his locker room presence is as valuable as ever.

## SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Chad Ryland is a reason why the Cardinals were in the playoff conversation in 2024. In his first game with Arizona, Ryland nailed the game-winner against the 49ers. He'd end October as the NFC Special Teams Player of the Month after two more game-winning kicks against the Dolphins and Chargers. With the 2023 fourth-rounder's competitiveness and clutch genes in mind, the Cardinals stuck with him. The key for Ryland is consistency, a trait he struggled with in New England.

Gannon calls punter Blake Gillikin a "weapon." Gillikin was having a Pro Bowl-caliber season before an ankle injury prematurely ended his campaign. He was a game-changer for the Cardinals, with 19 of his 38 punts landing inside the 20-yard line.

The Cardinals signed DeeJay Dallas to return kicks, and after scoring the first kickoff return TD under the new format in 2024, he is an important special teams piece, as is Greg Dortch, who will return punts.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The Cardinals were left with a bitter taste after falling out of first place in the division. Thanks to an improved defense, the NFC West is there for the taking. However, it comes down to consistency. Murray needs to be more balanced between the run and pass, generating a downfield passing attack and incorporating Harrison more effectively. Defensively, the Cardinals have an established edge rusher and interior line to cause problems. Playing against most other third-place teams throughout the league, the Cardinals size up well against their 2025 opponents and could find themselves in the playoff hunt.

## 2024 RESULTS (8-9)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Buffalo | L | 28-34 |
| Sept. | 15 | L.A. Rams | W | 41-10 |
| Sept. | 22 | Detroit | L | 13-20 |
| Sept. | 29 | Washington | L | 14-42 |
| Oct. | 6 | at San Francisco | W | 24-23 |
| Oct. | 13 | at Green Bay | L | 13-34 |
| Oct. | 21 | L.A. Chargers | W | 17-15 |
| Oct. | 27 | at Miami | W | 28-27 |
| Nov. | 3 | Chicago | W | 29-9 |
| Nov. | 10 | N.Y. Jets | W | 31-6 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Seattle | L | 6-16 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Minnesota | L | 22-23 |
| Dec. | 8 | Seattle | L | 18-30 |
| Dec. | 15 | New England | W | 30-17 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Carolina (ot) | L | 30-36 |
| Dec. | 28 | at L.A. Rams | L | 9-13 |
| Jan. | 5 | San Francisco | W | 47-24 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 358.2 | 11 | 8 |
| Rushing | 144.2 | 7 | 6 |
| Passing | 214.1 | 18 | 11 |
| Scoring | 23.5 | 12 | 7 |
| Third Down % | 43.0 | 8 | 4 |
| Points/Play | 0.386 | 12 | 7 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 342.5 | 21 | 9 |
| Rushing | 126.4 | 20 | 9 |
| Passing | 216.1 | 14 | 7 |
| Scoring | 22.3 | 15 | 7 |
| Interceptions | 9 | T24 | T12 |
| Sacks | 41 | T13 | T8 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.363 | 18 | 10 |
| TO Differential | -3 | 18 | 9 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyler Murray | 541 | 372 | 3,851 | 21 | 11 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| James Conner | 236 | 1,094 | 4.6 | 8 |
| Kyler Murray | 78 | 572 | 7.3 | 5 |
| Trey Benson | 63 | 291 | 4.6 | 1 |
| Emari Demercado | 24 | 223 | 9.3 | 1 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trey McBride | 111 | 1,146 | 10.3 | 2 |
| Marvin Harrison Jr. | 62 | 885 | 14.3 | 8 |
| Michael Wilson | 47 | 548 | 11.7 | 4 |
| James Conner | 47 | 414 | 8.8 | 1 |
| Greg Dortch | 37 | 342 | 9.2 | 3 |

**KICKING:** Chad Ryland, 28-32 FGs, 26-27 PATs, 110 points
**TACKLES:** Budda Baker, 164; Kyzir White, 137
**SACKS:** Zaven Collins, 5.0; Dante Stills, 4.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Sean Murphy-Bunting, 3; Garrett Williams, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**WAVING THE FLAG** With the Olympics around the corner, Arizona has become a hotbed for girls flag football. The Cardinals became the first NFL team to broadcast and produce a high school girls flag football game of the week, and the players bought into it. The 2024 rookies held a flag football camp, and Trey McBride, Kyler Murray and others attended girls flag football games throughout the Valley.

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

**SMOOTH ADJUSTMENT** Since signing with the Cardinals in 2024, **Mack Wilson Sr.** has become a fan favorite. The linebacker became a bit of an NFL insider during the 2025 free agency cycle, posting his excitement before news of a signing was reported. During the 2024 season, Wilson showed a different side of his personality. He started a rap group with former teammates Zach Pascal and Jesse Luketa called "3rd&Go." The trio, going by the names ZP, Lu' and Rocketship, rapped about the team and name-dropped a bunch of their teammates in various songs.

**RIVALS TURNED TEAMMATES** The Ohio State-Michigan game is arguably the biggest college rivalry, recently headlined by the matchup of wide receiver Marvin Harrison Jr., a former Buckeye, and cornerback Will Johnson, a former Wolverine. Despite the intensity of the game, the duo developed a friendship. Before the draft, they played golf in Arizona, since Johnson was training in the desert, and discussed being teammates instead of opponents. It was spoken into existence, as the Cardinals drafted Johnson.

# SCOUTING THE CARDINALS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ARIZONA

"It feels like the Cardinals are in a perpetual holding pattern. They have some nice pieces, especially a dual-threat quarterback with Kyler Murray, but they're just not quite there yet. I see improvement all over the roster, but they've got to make more strides this year. … With Marvin Harrison Jr., you thought he'd be more productive as a rookie. He did fine, but it wasn't quite what was expected from him. … By far, their best and most reliable option is throwing to star tight end Trey McBride. … James Conner regularly breaks tackles and escapes outside containment. … Zay Jones does a good job of utilizing his size advantage. … Paris Johnson Jr. has great size and sound technique working in his favor at left tackle. … Hjalte Froholdt is one of the stronger centers in the NFL as far as the weight room goes. And that translates to the field, too. … Having Jacoby Brissett on the roster gives Arizona a workable backup option should Murray get hurt. … A lot of teams felt like Walter Nolen III is a potential steal. It's hard to find a good inside pass-rusher like him. … There's a lot of talent across the front seven and a mix of youth and experience. Josh Sweat, Baron Browning and Calais Campbell give defensive coordinator Nick Rallis a lot of options for line stunts. … It's hard to get really enthusiastic about this off-the-ball linebacker group. … If Will Johnson gets back to his old form and fully healthy, then the Cardinals will have pulled off a really strong draft. … Budda Baker erases plays in every facet of the game: coverage, taking away the football, blitzing, stuffing the run and forcing fumbles and incompletions. He's a big-time hitter for his size."

## 2025 CARDINALS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Brissett, Jacoby | QB | 6-4 | 235 | 9 | NC State | FA-NE-25 | D3b-NE-16 |
| 1 | Murray, Kyler | QB | 5-10 | 207 | 6 | Oklahoma | D1-19 | D1-Ari-19 |
| 15 | Tune, Clayton | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 2 | Houston | D5a-23 | D5a-Ari-23 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 33 | Benson, Trey | RB | 6-0 | 216 | 1 | Florida State | D3a-24 | D3a-Ari-24 |
| 22 | Carter, Michael | RB | 5-8 | 201 | 4 | North Carolina | W-NYJ-23 | D4-NYJ-21 |
| 6 | Conner, James | RB | 6-1 | 233 | 8 | Pitt | FA-Pit-21 | D3b-Pit-17 |
| 20 | Dallas, DeeJay | RB | 5-10 | 214 | 5 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-Sea-24 | D4b-Sea-20 |
| 31 | Demercado, Emari | RB | 5-9 | 215 | 2 | TCU | FA-23 | FA-Ari-23 |
| 35 | Knight, Bam | RB | 5-11 | 209 | 2 | NC State | FA-25 | FA-NYJ-22 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 82 | Baccellia, Andre | WR | 5-10 | 175 | 3 | Washington | FA-21 | FA-KC-20 |
| | Deguara, Josiah | TE | 6-2 | 238 | 5 | Cincinnati | FA-Jac-25 | D3-GB-20 |
| 4 | Dortch, Greg | WR | 5-7 | 175 | 4 | Wake Forest | FA-21 | FA-NYJ-19 |
| 80 | Fehoko, Simi | WR | 6-4 | 218 | 4 | Stanford | FA-LAC-25 | D5-Dal-21 |
| 18 | Harrison Jr., Marvin | WR | 6-3 | 209 | 1 | Ohio State | D1a-24 | D1a-Ari-24 |
| 84 | Higgins, Elijah | TE | 6-3 | 235 | 2 | Stanford | W-Mia-23 | D6-Mia-23 |
| 86 | Jackson, Trishton | WR | 6-1 | 191 | 3 | Syracuse | FA-25 | FA-LAR-20 |
| 17 | Jones, Zay | WR | 6-2 | 200 | 8 | East Carolina | FA-24 | D2-Buf-17 |
| 85 | McBride, Trey | TE | 6-4 | 246 | 3 | Colorado State | D2-22 | D2-Ari-22 |
| 83 | Palmer, Tejhaun | WR | 6-1 | 210 | 1 | UAB | D6-24 | D6-Ari-24 |
| 87 | Reiman, Tip | TE | 6-5 | 271 | 1 | Illinois | D3c-24 | D3c-Ari-24 |
| 81 | Vokolek, Travis | TE | 6-6 | 260 | 1 | Nebraska | FA-23 | FA-Bal-23 |
| 16 | Watkins, Quez | WR | 6-0 | 193 | 5 | Southern Miss | FA-25 | D6b-Phi-20 |
| 89 | Weaver, Xavier | WR | 6-0 | 169 | 1 | Colorado | FA-24 | FA-Ari-24 |
| 14 | Wilson, Michael | WR | 6-2 | 213 | 2 | Stanford | D3b-23 | D3b-Ari-23 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 74 | Adams, Isaiah | OL | 6-4 | 315 | 1 | Illinois | D3b-24 | D3b-Ari-24 |
| 68 | Beachum, Kelvin | OL | 6-3 | 308 | 13 | SMU | FA-20 | D7-Pit-12 |
| 63 | Brown, Evan | OL | 6-3 | 320 | 6 | SMU | FA-Sea-24 | FA-NYG-18 |
| 64 | Curhan, Jake | OL | 6-6 | 316 | 4 | Cal | FA-Chi-25 | FA-Sea-21 |
| 66 | Curtis, McClendon | OL | 6-6 | 335 | 2 | Chattanooga | FA-25 | FA-LV-23 |
| 72 | Froholdt, Hjalte | OL | 6-5 | 310 | 5 | Arkansas | FA-Cle-23 | D4-NE-19 |
| 59 | Gaines II, Jon | OL | 6-4 | 303 | 1 | UCLA | D4-23 | D4-Ari-23 |
| 61 | Haynesworth, Sincere | OL | 6-1 | 310 | 1 | Tulane | FA-25 | FA-NO-24 |
| 70 | Johnson Jr., Paris | OL | 6-6 | 313 | 2 | Ohio State | D1-23 | D1-Ari-23 |
| 75 | Jones, Christian | OL | 6-5 | 305 | 1 | Texas | D5b-24 | D5b-Ari-24 |
| 50 | Leverett, Nick | OL | 6-3 | 310 | 4 | Rice | FA-24 | FA-TB-20 |
| 71 | Newman, Royce | OL | 6-5 | 310 | 4 | Ole Miss | FA-TB-25 | D4-GB-21 |
| 73 | Williams, Jonah | OL | 6-5 | 312 | 5 | Alabama | FA-Cin-24 | D1-Cin-19 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 93 | Campbell, Calais | DL | 6-8 | 307 | 17 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-Mia-25 | D2-Ari-08 |
| 91 | Collier, L.J. | DL | 6-2 | 291 | 5 | TCU | FA-Sea-23 | D1-Sea-19 |
| 97 | Goodlow, Anthony | DL | 6-5 | 284 | 1 | Oklahoma State | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 98 | Jones, Justin | DL | 6-3 | 309 | 7 | NC State | FA-Chi-24 | D3-LAC-18 |
| 94 | Mustipher, P.J. | DL | 6-4 | 318 | 2 | Penn State | FA-24 | FA-Den-23 |
| 92 | Nichols, Bilal | DL | 6-3 | 313 | 7 | Delaware | FA-LV-24 | D5-Chi-18 |
| 56 | Robinson, Darius | DL | 6-5 | 285 | 1 | Missouri | D1b-24 | D1b-Ari-24 |
| 90 | Stille, Ben | DL | 6-4 | 296 | 3 | Nebraska | FA-24 | FA-Mia-22 |
| 55 | Stills, Dante | DL | 6-4 | 286 | 2 | West Virginia | D6b-23 | D6b-Ari-23 |
| 94 | Tomlinson, Dalvin | DL | 6-3 | 325 | 8 | Alabama | FA-Cle-25 | D2-NYG-17 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 41 | Brown, Elliott | LB | 6-4 | 225 | 1 | Virginia | FA-25 | FA-Ari-25 |
| 5 | Browning, Baron | LB | 6-3 | 240 | 4 | Ohio State | T-Den-24 | D3b-Den-21 |
| 25 | Collins, Zaven | LB | 6-4 | 260 | 4 | Tulsa | D1-21 | D1-Ari-21 |
| 27 | Davis-Gaither, Akeem | LB | 6-2 | 238 | 5 | Appalachian State | FA-Cin-25 | D4-Cin-20 |
| 48 | Eifler, Milo | LB | 6-1 | 228 | 3 | Illinois | FA-24 | FA-NYJ-21 |
| 53 | Jones, Vi | LB | 6-2 | 225 | 2 | NC State | W-TB-24 | FA-Sea-22 |
| 9 | Ojulari, BJ | LB | 6-2 | 248 | 2 | LSU | D2-23 | D2-Ari-23 |
| 44 | Pappoe, Owen | LB | 6-0 | 225 | 2 | Auburn | D5b-23 | D5b-Ari-23 |
| 10 | Sweat, Josh | LB | 6-5 | 265 | 7 | Florida State | FA-Phi-25 | D4b-Phi-18 |
| 54 | Thomas, Xavier | LB | 6-2 | 244 | 1 | Clemson | D5a-24 | D5a-Ari-24 |
| 43 | Walker, Mykal | LB | 6-3 | 230 | 5 | Fresno State | FA-Was-25 | D4-Atl-20 |
| 49 | Whitley, Benton | LB | 6-4 | 260 | 2 | Holy Cross | FA-24 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 2 | Wilson Sr., Mack | LB | 6-1 | 246 | 6 | Alabama | FA-NE-24 | D5a-Cle-19 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Baker, Budda | S | 5-10 | 195 | 8 | Washington | D2-17 | D2-Ari-17 |
| 32 | Blount, Joey | S | 6-1 | 201 | 3 | Virginia | FA-23 | FA-Sea-22 |
| 35 | Boye-Doe, Ekow | CB | 6-0 | 177 | 2 | Kansas State | FA-25 | FA-KC-23 |
| 13 | Clark, Kei'Trel | CB | 5-10 | 181 | 2 | Louisville | D6a-23 | D6a-Ari-23 |
| 39 | Davis, Jaden | CB | 5-10 | 182 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | D7-24 | D7-Ari-24 |
| 30 | Hall, Darren | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 3 | San Diego State | FA-24 | D4-Atl-21 |
| 28 | Jones, Elijah | CB | 6-1 | 185 | 1 | Boston College | D3d-24 | D3d-Ari-24 |
| 37 | Jones, Jaylon | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 3 | Ole Miss | FA-Chi-25 | FA-Chi-22 |
| 16 | Melton, Max | CB | 5-11 | 187 | 1 | Rutgers | D2-24 | D2-Ari-24 |
| 23 | Murphy-Bunting, S. | CB | 6-0 | 195 | 6 | Central Michigan | FA-Ten-24 | D2-TB-19 |
| 26 | Robinson, Jammie | S | 5-11 | 195 | 2 | Florida State | W-Car-24 | D5-Car-23 |
| 42 | Taylor-Demerson, D. | S | 5-10 | 197 | 1 | Texas Tech | D4-24 | D4-Ari-24 |
| 24 | Thomas V, Starling | CB | 5-10 | 194 | 2 | UAB | W-Det-23 | FA-Det-23 |
| 34 | Thompson, Jalen | S | 5-11 | 190 | 6 | Washington State | SD5-19 | SD5-Ari-19 |
| 21 | Williams, Garrett | CB | 5-10 | 192 | 2 | Syracuse | D3a-23 | D3a-Ari-23 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 46 | Brewer, Aaron | LS | 6-5 | 232 | 13 | San Diego State | FA-16 | FA-Den-12 |
| 12 | Gillikin, Blake | P | 6-2 | 196 | 4 | Penn State | FA-23 | FA-NO-20 |
| 38 | Ryland, Chad | K | 6-0 | 195 | 2 | Maryland | FA-24 | D4-NE-23 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 18 | Marvin Harrison Jr. | 17 | Zay Jones |
| WR | 4 | Greg Dortch | 89 | Xavier Weaver |
| WR | 14 | Michael Wilson | 80 | Simi Fehoko |
| LT | 70 | Paris Johnson Jr. | 68 | Kelvin Beachum |
| LG | 63 | Evan Brown | 58 | Hayden Conner (R) |
| C | 72 | Hjalte Froholdt | 59 | Jon Gaines II |
| RG | 74 | Isaiah Adams | 71 | Royce Newman |
| RT | 73 | Jonah Williams | 75 | Christian Jones |
| TE | 85 | Trey McBride | 84 | Elijah Higgins |
| QB | 1 | Kyler Murray | 7 | Jacoby Brissett |
| RB | 6 | James Conner | 33 | Trey Benson |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DT | 93 | Calais Campbell | 97 | Walter Nolen III (R) |
| NT | 94 | Dalvin Tomlinson | 92 | Bilal Nichols |
| DT | 56 | Darius Robinson | 98 | Justin Jones |
| OLB | 10 | Josh Sweat | 9 | BJ Ojulari |
| ILB | 2 | Mack Wilson Sr. | 50 | Cody Simon (R) |
| ILB | 27 | Akeem Davis-Gaither | 44 | Owen Pappoe |
| OLB | 5 | Baron Browning | 25 | Zaven Collins |
| CB | 23 | Sean Murphy-Bunting | 16 | Max Melton |
| CB | 0 | Will Johnson (R) | 24 | Starling Thomas V |
| NB | 21 | Garrett Williams | 29 | Denzel Burke (R) |
| SS | 34 | Jalen Thompson | 42 | Dadrion Taylor-Demerson |
| FS | 3 | Budda Baker | 32 | Joey Blount |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 38 | Chad Ryland | KR | 20 | DeeJay Dallas |
| P | 12 | Blake Gillikin | PR | 4 | Greg Dortch |

**34.5%**

A league-high 34.5% of Marvin Harrison Jr.'s targets were classified as "tight window" throws, per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## CARDINALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Walter Nolen III | DL | 6-4 | 296 | Ole Miss |
| 2 | Will Johnson | CB | 6-2 | 194 | Michigan |
| 3 | Jordan Burch | OLB | 6-4 | 297 | Oregon |
| 4 | Cody Simon | ILB | 6-2 | 229 | Ohio State |
| 5 | Denzel Burke | CB | 5-11 | 186 | Ohio State |
| 6 | Hayden Conner | OL | 6-6 | 314 | Texas |
| 7 | Kitan Crawford | S | 5-11 | 202 | Nevada |

The 2025 draft class is a clear indication of the organization's offseason priorities, as the Cardinals drafted six defensive players. Walter Nolen III joins the defensive line rotation and will learn from the veterans in the room. He's a three-down player, something the Cardinals value. Will Johnson slid into the second round because of his injury history but could be a steal if he stays healthy. Denzel Burke joins him in the cornerback room. Jordan Burch has the frame of a defensive lineman, but his explosiveness will be important coming off the edge. Cody Simon will compete for snaps at Mike linebacker, similar to his days at Ohio State.

# LA RAMS

NFC WEST FORECAST

1

After coming a red-zone conversion away from upsetting the Philadelphia Eagles in the NFC divisional round, the Rams faced something of a fork in the road this offseason. Even as they worked on a contract restructure, the Rams allowed quarterback Matthew Stafford to explore the possibility of a trade to another franchise.

But Stafford and the Rams recommitted to each other, and in doing so, the franchise clarified its timeline. Stafford is back to lead an offense full of firepower, from the receiving duo of Puka Nacua and Davante Adams to reliable running back Kyren Williams. A young pass rush turned from a question mark at the beginning of last season into something the Rams can build around after hitting on Jared Verse and Braden Fiske in the 2024 draft.

In an NFC in which several teams took a step backward this offseason, the Rams pushed their chips back into the middle of the table. The Adams signing was one of the biggest of free agency. Defensive tackle Poona Ford shored up a shaky run defense. And now the Rams, coming off an NFC West title and a playoff win, are ready to compete again for the NFC crown — and maybe more if things break their way.

## OFFENSE

The Rams swapped out former Super Bowl MVP wide receiver Cooper Kupp for Adams this offseason, taking the veteran who has had five straight 1,000-yard seasons. After finishing 25th in red-zone conversion rate in 2024, the Rams added the receiver who ranked fifth in the NFL in red-zone touchdowns in 2023 with six.

The Rams also brought back some familiar faces on offense. Receiver Tutu Atwell returns, with head coach Sean McVay promising to do more to utilize the speedy receiver. The Rams need someone like Atwell to stretch the field so that Nacua and Adams have more room to operate underneath.

There aren't any true position battles on the Rams offense entering training camp. Even at center, where Beaux Limmer took over midseason in 2024, the Rams have already announced that free-agent reacquisition Coleman Shelton would take the reins. Shelton, who started for the Rams in 2023 before playing in Chicago last season, provides a steady presence at the line of scrimmage, and his teammates respect his ability to call out blocking assignments before the snap.

One area to watch for snap distribution will be running back. Williams is the clear leader of the room after a second consecutive 1,100-yard season. The Rams love his ability to turn a run that is blocked for three yards into a four- or five-yard gain, and his ability to pick up blitzes keeps him on the field for third downs.

Blake Corum was drafted in the third round last year to be Williams' backup, but his skill set is so comparable to the starter that he doesn't add much to the offense when he's out there. Enter Jarquez Hunter, the Auburn running back who ran a 4.44 40-yard dash during the draft process. His speed and strength give him a good chance to usurp Corum for the No. 2 job and give the Rams offense a change of pace.

At tight end, Tyler Higbee should continue to get the lion's share of snaps. He provided a big boost to the offense when he came back from a knee injury in December, particularly with his ability to get open in the red zone. But the

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | Houston | 4:25 |
| Sept. 14 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | at Philadelphia | 1:00 |
| Sept. 28 | Indianapolis | 4:05 |
| Oct. 2 | San Francisco | 8:15 |
| Oct. 12 | at Baltimore | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Jacksonville (London) | 9:30 a.m. |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 2 | New Orleans | 4:05 |
| Nov. 9 | at San Francisco | 4:25 |
| Nov. 16 | Seattle | 4:05 |
| Nov. 23 | Tampa Bay | 8:20 |
| Nov. 30 | at Carolina | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | at Arizona | 4:25 |
| Dec. 14 | Detroit | 4:25 |
| Dec. 18 | at Seattle | 8:15 |
| Dec. 29 | at Atlanta | 8:15 |
| TBD | Arizona | |

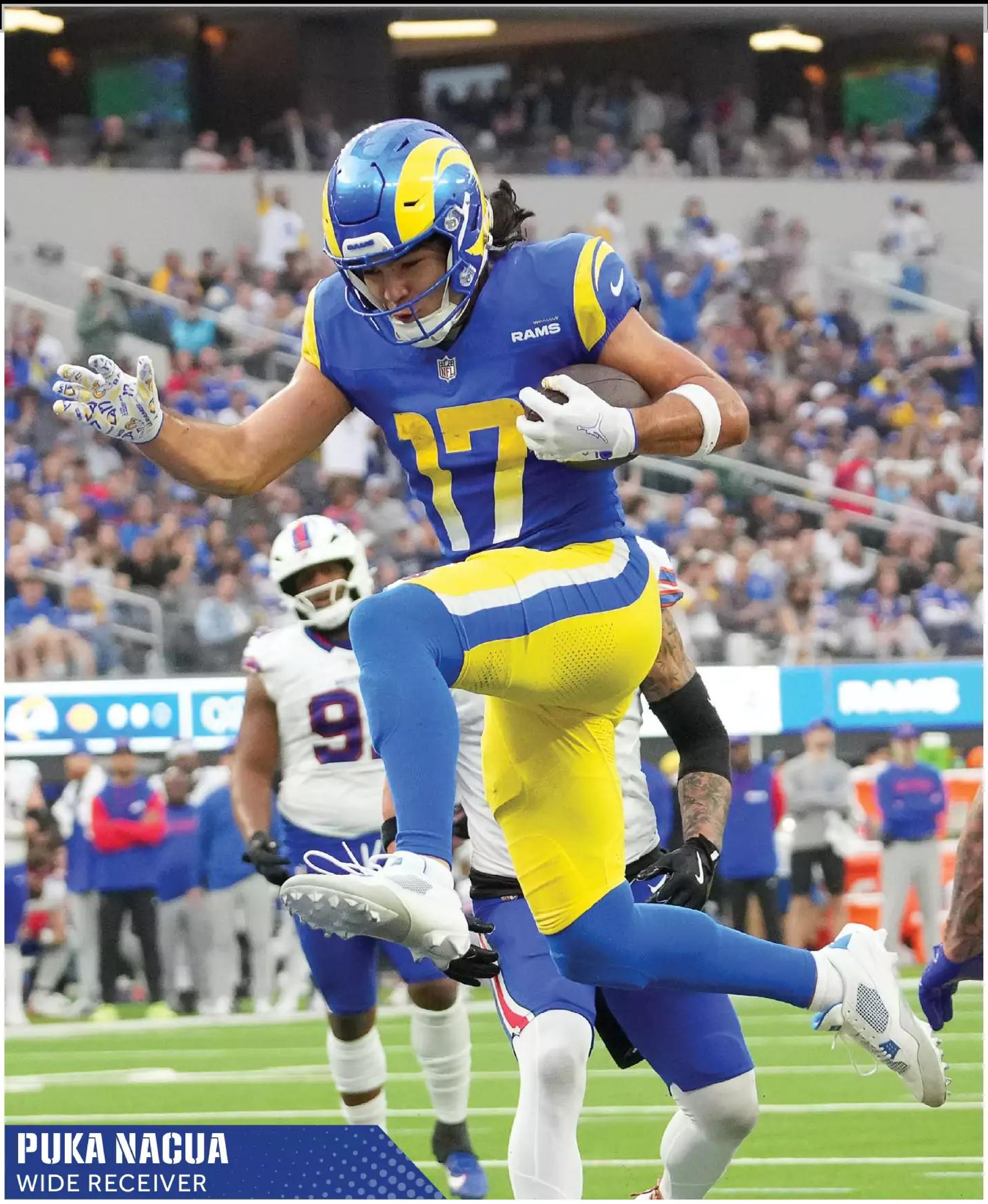
*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |
| 2021 | SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS | 12 |
| 2022 | | 5 |
| 2023 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |
| 2024 | NFC PLAYOFFS | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Sean McVay
**Record With Team:** 80-52
**Career Record:** 80-52
**Offensive Coordinator:** Mike LaFleur
**Defensive Coordinator:** Chris Shula
**Special Teams Coord.:** Chase Blackburn
**Quarterbacks:** Dave Ragone
**Running Backs:** Ron Gould
**Wide Receivers:** Eric Yarber
**Tight Ends:** Scott Huff
**Offensive Line:** Ryan Wendell
**Offensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Nate Scheelhaase
**Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator:** Giff Smith
**Inside Linebackers:** Greg Williams
**Outside Linebackers:** Joe Coniglio
**Assistant Head Coach/Defensive Pass Game Coordinator:** Aubrey Pleasant
**Safeties:** Chris Beake



**PUKA NACUA**
WIDE RECEIVER

KIRBY LEE-IMAGN IMAGES

Rams will also try to get second-round pick Terrance Ferguson on the field, either in more 12-personnel sets or with Ferguson as the lone tight end. The Rams like his after-the-catch talent, his ability to line up in multiple spots around the field and his sense for space when things go off-schedule.

## DEFENSE

The Rams are looking to build off a promising first season under defensive coordinator Chris Shula. The unit was driven by its pass rush; including the playoffs, Verse led the NFL with 89 quarterback pressures in 2024, while defensive tackle Kobie Turner has more pressures against double-teams since the start of the 2023 season than any other player.

But the Rams need to find ways to be a more balanced defense and stop the run from time to time, especially after Saquon Barkley single-handedly sent them home in January. The addition of Ford goes a long way in that effort. He had 8.5 run stuffs in 2024 and will absorb blocks in the middle of the Rams' 3-4 scheme.

But the Rams also implemented a Cheetah scheme after the bye last year, with five defenders at the line of scrimmage and outside linebacker Michael Hoecht lined up as the sole inside 'backer. Who will fill that role after Hoecht's departure in free agency will be a big storyline entering training camp. Rookie edge rusher Josaiah Stewart could be a candidate, given that he has enough experience dropping into coverage to fill that aspect of the role.

The biggest position battle entering camp will be for the second linebacker job next to Omar Speights. The Rams signed Nate Landman to a one-year deal in free agency, and he's a reliable tackler who is solid against the run. But fifth-round pick Chris Paul Jr. could provide a more dynamic element to the defense with his coverage skills and ability to blitz, giving Shula another weapon to utilize in third-and-long packages.

## SPECIALISTS

Placekicker Joshua Karty went through some growing pains as a rookie, but he still connected on 85.3% of his field-goal attempts in his first season, including a 58-yarder. He needs to reduce his four missed PATs, but he gives the Rams a more reliable option overall than they had in previous years.

Punter Ethan Evans proved to be a weapon for the Rams in 2024, placing 30 of his 55 attempts inside the opposing 20-yard line. His combination of placement and natural leg strength gives the Rams a lot of confidence in Evans entering his third season.

The Rams will likely roll out Xavier Smith and Jordan Whittington as punt and kickoff returners, respectively, again this season. Smith provided a couple of energizing returns, but for the most part, these units were workmanlike rather than dynamic.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

With so much continuity from last year's roster that came within striking distance of the NFC Championship Game, the Rams enter 2025 with more confidence than they've had since 2021, when they went on to win Super Bowl LVI. Are the Rams ready to get back to the top of the mountain? That remains to be seen, but they should compete for their third NFC title in eight seasons.

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | at Detroit (ot) | L | 20-26 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Arizona | L | 10-41 |
| Sept. | 22 | San Francisco | W | 27-24 |
| Sept. | 29 | at Chicago | L | 18-24 |
| Oct. | 6 | Green Bay | L | 19-24 |
| Oct. | 20 | Las Vegas | W | 20-15 |
| Oct. | 24 | Minnesota | W | 30-20 |
| Nov. | 3 | at Seattle (ot) | W | 26-20 |
| Nov. | 11 | Miami | L | 15-23 |
| Nov. | 17 | at New England | W | 28-22 |
| Nov. | 24 | Philadelphia | L | 20-37 |
| Dec. | 1 | at New Orleans | W | 21-14 |
| Dec. | 8 | Buffalo | W | 44-42 |
| Dec. | 12 | at San Francisco | W | 12-6 |
| Dec. | 22 | at N.Y. Jets | W | 19-9 |
| Dec. | 28 | Arizona | W | 13-9 |
| Jan. | 5 | Seattle | L | 25-30 |
| Postseason | | | | |
| Jan. | 13 | Minnesota | W | 27-9 |
| Jan. | 19 | at Philadelphia | L | 22-28 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 331.4 | 15 | 11 |
| Rushing | 103.8 | 24 | 13 |
| Passing | 227.5 | 10 | 7 |
| Scoring | 21.6 | 20 | 11 |
| Third Down % | 36.8 | T23 | T11 |
| Points/Play | 0.358 | 17 | 10 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 353.1 | 26 | 12 |
| Rushing | 130.0 | 22 | 10 |
| Passing | 223.1 | 20 | 10 |
| Scoring | 22.7 | 17 | 9 |
| Interceptions | 13 | T13 | T5 |
| Sacks | 38 | T21 | 12 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.356 | 13 | 7 |
| TO Differential | +6 | T10 | 6 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Matthew Stafford | 517 | 340 | 3,762 | 20 | 8 |
| Jimmy Garoppolo | 41 | 27 | 334 | 2 | 1 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kyren Williams | 316 | 1,299 | 4.1 | 14 |
| Blake Corum | 58 | 207 | 3.6 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Puka Nacua | 79 | 990 | 12.5 | 3 |
| Cooper Kupp | 67 | 710 | 10.6 | 6 |
| Tutu Atwell | 42 | 562 | 13.4 | 0 |
| Kyren Williams | 34 | 182 | 5.4 | 2 |
| Demarcus Robinson | 31 | 505 | 16.3 | 7 |
| Colby Parkinson | 30 | 294 | 9.8 | 1 |

**KICKING:** Joshua Karty. 29-34 FGs, 32-36 PATs, 119 points

**TACKLES:** Christian Rozeboom, 135; Quentin Lake, 111

**SACKS:** Braden Fiske, 8.5; Kobie Turner, 8.0

**INTERCEPTIONS:** Kamren Kinchens, 4; Jaylen McCollough, 4

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**SECOND CAREER** Fresh off his appearance as Goo on "The Masked Singer" in late 2024, Rams defensive lineman **Kobie Turner** has since released two singles — "House of the Rising Sun" in December and a cover of the Kesha song "Praying" in April. Turner, who earned the nickname "The Conductor" due to his signature sack celebration, studied music and was a member of an a cappella group at the University of Richmond.

**UPWARD TRAJECTORY** Turner and four other members of the Rams' pass rush — Jared Verse, Braden Fiske, Byron Young and Josaiah Stewart — have shared similar paths to the NFL: a smaller football program to begin their college career, a transfer to a Power 4 program and a Day 1 or Day 2 selection in the NFL Draft.

**THANKS MOM** Rookie linebacker Chris Paul Jr. goes by the nickname "Pooh." It was a name his parents called him occasionally growing up, but when his mom brought a sign with Paul's face and the name "Pooh" written under it to one of his travel ball games, the name stuck.

**COURTSHIP** Head coach Sean McVay first expressed interest in teaming up with Davante Adams in 2019. So when Adams hit free agency this spring, McVay pulled out all the stops. He peppered Adams with phone calls during the receiver's vacation to Japan and sent him highlight videos, which the coach narrated. That level of effort helped convince Adams to sign with the Rams.

# SCOUTING THE RAMS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES

"Honestly, not seeing decline from Matthew Stafford. He can still sling the rock. Yes, Sean McVay and Les Snead need to start planning ahead. But extending his deal was the right move. It's a have and have-not league at quarterback, and they have one. … There's a lot of cool plays McVay can dial up with Davante Adams in the huddle to go with Puka Nacua. There aren't a lot of dudes who can compete for the football the way they can and freeze DBs with their footwork. … The speed factor with Tutu Atwell is huge. … It's an underrated offensive line overall. .. Steve Avila has Pro Bowl potential. … Kevin Dotson got a nice contract, and he earned it all. … Rookie tight end Terrance Ferguson is the kind of Swiss army knife option McVay has been looking for. Having Ferguson and Tyler Higbee is a heckuva grouping at tight end. … Kyren Williams has been talking about how he's capable of even more production. I believe him. … They've done a nice job of filling out the front seven since Aaron Donald retired. They've nailed a lot of picks, especially Jared Verse, Braden Fiske and Kobie Turner. … Omar Speights makes a ton of plays. … This is a pretty good corner group with Darious Williams and Ahkello Witherspoon and Quentin Lake at nickel. … Safety depth could stand for some upgrades. … When they signed Poona Ford, a lot of GMs were disappointed they couldn't get that level of run-stopping DT at their price."

JAYNE KAMIN-ONCEA-IMAGN IMAGES

## 2025 RAMS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Bennett, Stetson | QB | 5-11 | 190 | 1 | Georgia | D4-23 | D4-LAR-23 |
| 11 | Garoppolo, Jimmy | QB | 6-2 | 225 | 11 | Eastern Illinois | FA-LV-24 | D2-NE-14 |
| 9 | Stafford, Matthew | QB | 6-3 | 214 | 16 | Georgia | T-Det-21 | D1a-Det-09 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Corum, Blake | RB | 5-8 | 210 | 1 | Michigan | D3-24 | D3-LAR-24 |
| 20 | Rivers, Ronnie | RB | 5-9 | 192 | 3 | Fresno State | FA-22 | FA-Ari-22 |
| 32 | Schrader, Cody | RB | 5-9 | 214 | 1 | Missouri | W-SF-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 23 | Williams, Kyren | RB | 5-9 | 202 | 3 | Notre Dame | D5-22 | D5-LAR-22 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17 | Adams, Davante | WR | 6-1 | 215 | 11 | Fresno State | FA-NYJ-25 | D2-GB-14 |
| 87 | Allen, Davis | TE | 6-6 | 251 | 2 | Clemson | D5-23 | D5-LAR-23 |
| 5 | Atwell, Tutu | WR | 5-9 | 165 | 4 | Louisville | D2-21 | D2-LAR-21 |
| 2 | Cephus, Quintez | WR | 6-1 | 208 | 3 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | D5-Det-20 |
| | Covey, Britain | WR | 5-8 | 173 | 3 | Utah | FA-Phi-25 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 89 | Higbee, Tyler | TE | 6-6 | 255 | 9 | WKU | D4a-16 | D4a-LAR-16 |
| 12 | Nacua, Puka | WR | 6-2 | 212 | 2 | BYU | D5-23 | D5-LAR-23 |
| 86 | Parkinson, Colby | TE | 6-7 | 265 | 5 | Stanford | FA-Sea-24 | D4a-Sea-20 |
| 19 | Smith, Xavier | WR | 5-9 | 176 | 1 | Florida A&M | FA-23 | FA-LAR-23 |
| 6 | Stoops, Drake | WR | 5-10 | 189 | 1 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 88 | Whittington, Jordan | WR | 6-1 | 202 | 1 | Texas | D6-24 | D6-LAR-24 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 61 | Arcuri, AJ | OL | 6-7 | 308 | 2 | Michigan State | D7c-22 | D7c-LAR-22 |
| 73 | Avila, Steve | OL | 6-3 | 338 | 2 | TCU | D2-23 | D2-LAR-23 |
| 67 | Dedich, Justin | OL | 6-2 | 300 | 1 | USC | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 69 | Dotson, Kevin | OL | 6-4 | 330 | 5 | Louisiana | T-Pit-23 | D4b-Pit-20 |
| 79 | Havenstein, Rob | OL | 6-8 | 323 | 10 | Wisconsin | D2-15 | D2-LAR-15 |
| 77 | Jackson, Alaric | OL | 6-7 | 345 | 4 | Iowa | FA-21 | FA-LAR-21 |
| 66 | Leveston, KT | OL | 6-5 | 336 | 1 | Kansas State | D7-24 | D7-LAR-24 |
| 50 | Limmer, Beaux | OL | 6-5 | 312 | 1 | Arkansas | D6-24 | D6-LAR-24 |
| 71 | McClendon Jr., Warren | OL | 6-4 | 317 | 2 | Georgia | D5-23 | D5-LAR-23 |
| 63 | McMahon, Dylan | OL | 6-3 | 298 | 1 | NC State | FA-24 | D6-Phi-24 |
| 65 | Shelton, Coleman | OL | 6-4 | 299 | 6 | Washington | FA-Chi-25 | FA-LAR-19 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 90 | Davis, Tyler | DE | 6-2 | 300 | 1 | Clemson | D6-24 | D6-LAR-24 |
| 55 | Fiske, Braden | DE | 6-5 | 291 | 1 | Florida State | D2-24 | D2-LAR-24 |
| 95 | Ford, Poona | DT | 5-11 | 310 | 7 | Texas | FA-LAC-25 | FA-Sea-18 |
| 93 | Heflin, Jack | DE | 6-3 | 304 | 1 | Iowa | FA-24 | FA-GB-21 |
| 94 | Johnson, Desjuan | DE | 6-3 | 280 | 2 | Toledo | D7-23 | D7-LAR-23 |
| 52 | Murchison, Larrell | DE | 6-2 | 285 | 5 | NC State | FA-24 | D5-Ten-20 |
| 91 | Turner, Kobie | DE | 6-2 | 297 | 2 | Wake Forest | D3-23 | D3-LAR-23 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | Fields II, Tony | ILB | 6-1 | 220 | 4 | West Virginia | FA-24 | D5-Cle-21 |
| 31 | Hampton, Nick | OLB | 6-3 | 250 | 2 | Appalachian State | D5-23 | D5-LAR-23 |
| 44 | Jackson, Brennan | OLB | 6-4 | 263 | 1 | Washington State | D5-24 | D5-LAR-24 |
| 53 | Landman, Nate | ILB | 6-3 | 240 | 3 | Colorado | FA-Atl-25 | FA-Atl-22 |
| 58 | Neal, Elias | ILB | 6-0 | 227 | 1 | Marshall | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 51 | Reeder, Troy | ILB | 6-3 | 236 | 6 | Delaware | FA-24 | FA-LAR-19 |
| 48 | Speights, Omar | ILB | 6-1 | 228 | 1 | LSU | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 96 | Thomas II, Keir | OLB | 6-2 | 260 | 3 | Florida State | FA-22 | FA-LAR-22 |
| 8 | Verse, Jared | OLB | 6-4 | 260 | 1 | Florida State | D1-24 | D1-LAR-24 |
| 0 | Young, Byron | OLB | 6-2 | 258 | 2 | Tennessee | D3a-23 | D3a-LAR-23 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Curl, Kam | S | 6-2 | 205 | 5 | Arkansas | FA-Was-24 | D7a-Was-20 |
| 14 | Durant, Cobie | CB | 5-11 | 182 | 3 | South Carolina St. | D4-22 | D4-LAR-22 |
| 25 | Forbes Jr., Emmanuel | CB | 6-0 | 180 | 2 | Mississippi State | W-Was-24 | D1-Was-23 |
| 27 | Green, A.J. | CB | 6-2 | 198 | 3 | Oklahoma State | FA-24 | FA-Cle-20 |
| 34 | Ingle, Tanner | S | 5-8 | 195 | 1 | NC State | FA-23 | FA-LAR-23 |
| 38 | Jolly, Shaun | CB | 5-9 | 186 | 3 | Appalachian State | FA-23 | FA-Cle-22 |
| 1 | Kendrick, Derion | CB | 6-0 | 199 | 3 | Georgia | D6b-22 | D6b-LAR-22 |
| 26 | Kinchens, Kamren | S | 6-0 | 207 | 1 | Miami (Fla.) | D3-24 | D3-LAR-24 |
| 37 | Lake, Quentin | S | 6-1 | 196 | 3 | UCLA | D6a-22 | D6a-LAR-22 |
| 33 | Lampkin, Cam | CB | 5-11 | 176 | 1 | Washington State | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 39 | McCollough, Jaylen | S | 6-0 | 202 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 30 | Wallace, Josh | CB | 6-0 | 189 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |
| 24 | Williams, Darious | CB | 5-9 | 192 | 7 | UAB | FA-Jac-24 | FA-Bal-18 |
| 4 | Witherspoon, Ahkello | CB | 6-2 | 195 | 7 | Colorado | FA-24 | D3-SF-17 |
| 21 | Woods, Charles | CB | 5-11 | 185 | 1 | SMU | FA-24 | FA-LAR-24 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 42 | Evans, Ethan | P | 6-3 | 250 | 2 | Wingate | D7-23 | D7-LAR-23 |
| 16 | Karty, Joshua | K | 6-2 | 207 | 1 | Stanford | D6-24 | D6-LAR-24 |
| 47 | Ward, Alex | LS | 6-4 | 241 | 2 | UCF | FA-23 | FA-LAR-23 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 12 | Puka Nacua | 88 | Jordan Whittington |
| WR | 17 | Davante Adams | 15 | Konata Mumpfield (R) |
| WR | 5 | Tutu Atwell | 19 | Xavier Smith |
| LT | 77 | Alaric Jackson | 71 | Warren McClendon Jr. |
| LG | 73 | Steve Avila | 67 | Justin Dedich |
| C | 65 | Coleman Shelton | 50 | Beaux Limmer |
| RG | 69 | Kevin Dotson | 66 | KT Leveston |
| RT | 79 | Rob Havenstein | 71 | Warren McClendon Jr. |
| TE | 89 | Tyler Higbee | 18 | Terrance Ferguson (R) |
| QB | 9 | Matthew Stafford | 11 | Jimmy Garoppolo |
| RB | 23 | Kyren Williams | 22 | Blake Corum |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 55 | Braden Fiske | 90 | Tyler Davis |
| NT | 95 | Poona Ford | 57 | Ty Hamilton (R) |
| DT | 91 | Kobie Turner | 94 | Desjuan Johnson |
| OLB | 8 | Jared Verse | 41 | Josaiah Stewart (R) |
| ILB | 48 | Omar Speights | 53 | Nate Landman |
| ILB | 54 | Chris Paul Jr. (R) | 51 | Troy Reeder |
| OLB | 0 | Byron Young | 44 | Brennan Jackson |
| CB | 4 | Ahkello Witherspoon | 14 | Cobie Durant |
| CB | 24 | Darious Williams | 30 | Josh Wallace |
| SS | 3 | Kam Curl | 39 | Jaylen McCollough |
| FS | 37 | Quentin Lake | 26 | Kamren Kinchens |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 16 | Joshua Karty | KR | 88 | Jordan Whittington |
| P | 42 | Ethan Evans | PR | 19 | Xavier Smith |

**2-7**

The Rams won just two of nine games when Matthew Stafford or Jimmy Garoppolo took multiple sacks.

## RAMS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Terrance Ferguson | TE | 6-5 | 247 | Oregon |
| 3 | Josaiah Stewart | OLB | 6-1 | 249 | Michigan |
| 4 | Jarquez Hunter | RB | 5-9 | 204 | Auburn |
| 5 | Ty Hamilton | DT | 6-2 | 299 | Ohio State |
| 5 | Chris Paul Jr. | LB | 6-0 | 222 | Ole Miss |
| 7 | Konata Mumpfield | WR | 5-11 | 186 | Pitt |

Terrance Ferguson and Jarquez Hunter give the Rams different looks on offense than the tight ends and running backs currently on the roster. Ferguson can create yards after the catch, while Hunter has breakaway speed that complements Kyren Williams' steady efficiency. Ty Hamilton gives the Rams another run-stuffer in the middle of the defense. Chris Paul Jr. has the best chance to be an immediate starter, especially with the extra element that his blitzing ability brings. It's not the flashiest class, but the Rams found players who can contribute immediately.

# SF 49ERS

NFC WEST FORECAST
**3**

The sound you hear might be the 49ers' Super Bowl window slamming shut.

After an unexpectedly awful 6-11 season in 2024, the 49ers endured a painful cost-cutting offseason in which they parted with eight starters. The exodus included four players who have earned Pro Bowl honors and the heartbeat of the defense in linebacker Dre Greenlaw.

Meanwhile, the 49ers didn't counter the loss of talent with major additions. Their biggest free-agent signing was Jaguars backup tight end Luke Farrell.

Still, the 49ers probably patched some of their many roster holes with 11 draft picks, matching their most they've had since 2016. And the 2023 NFC champions still have Pro Bowl quarterback Brock Purdy, seven All-Pro players and an inviting last-place schedule that includes only four games against 2024 playoff teams.

"While we've seen a lot of great players leave, and that's hard to watch, we still have a lot of Hall of Fame-worthy players," general manager John Lynch says. "There are some guys who will be staring that in the face when they're done. There's a lot of them on this roster. There's a tremendous core that we can go be competitive with while adding some young players."

## OFFENSE

This unit emerged largely unscathed from the offseason roster carnage. The 49ers are returning nine starters from a group that ranked fourth in the NFL in yards and tied for 13th in points per game last season despite injuries that sidelined three All-Pros — left tackle Trent Williams, running back Christian McCaffrey and wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk — for 30 combined games.

Those injuries help explain Purdy's statistical regression. He ranked 13th in the NFL in passer rating after posting the 13th-highest passer rating in league history in 2023. But head coach Kyle Shanahan has said that he wants Purdy to be his quarterback as long as he's employed by the 49ers, and there's a belief that better overall health will lead to improved results in 2025.

About that improved health: It's not a guarantee, given Purdy's accomplished-but-aging supporting cast. It includes Williams, who is entering his age-37 season and has missed multiple games with injuries for the past nine seasons. And McCaffrey, who has missed 24 games over the past four seasons and ranks fifth among active players in career touches (1,871). And tight end George Kittle, who will turn 32 in October, and Aiyuk, who isn't expected to be ready for the start of the regular season after undergoing knee surgery in November.

Without Aiyuk, the 49ers still have Jauan Jennings, their most productive wide receiver in 2024, and Ricky Pearsall, last year's first-round pick who showed promising flashes near the end of his adversity-filled rookie season. However, there are potential depth issues at other positions.

In March, the 49ers traded their 2024 leading rusher, Jordan Mason, to the Vikings, which leaves Isaac Guerendo and fifth-round pick Jordan James as McCaffrey's top backups. Guerendo averaged five yards per carry as a rookie last year, but he was limited to 84 attempts due to multiple injuries after compiling an extensive medical file in college.

The 49ers return four starting offensive linemen, headlined by Williams and right guard Dominick Puni, who was stellar in his rookie season. But their decision to use just one of their 11 draft picks on this position group, selecting guard Connor Colby in the seventh round, was a surprise, given their apparent needs.

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | at Seattle | 4:05 |
| Sept. 14 | at New Orleans | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | Arizona | 4:25 |
| Sept. 28 | Jacksonville | 4:05 |
| Oct. 2 | at L.A. Rams | 8:15 |
| Oct. 12 | at Tampa Bay | 1:00 |
| Oct. 19 | Atlanta | 8:20 |
| Oct. 26 | at Houston | 1:00 |
| Nov. 2 | at N.Y. Giants | 1:00 |
| Nov. 9 | L.A. Rams | 4:25 |
| Nov. 16 | at Arizona | 4:05 |
| Nov. 24 | Carolina | 8:15 |
| Nov. 30 | at Cleveland | 1:00 |
| Dec. 7 | BYE | |
| Dec. 14 | Tennessee | 4:25 |
| Dec. 22 | at Indianapolis | 8:15 |
| Dec. 28 | Chicago | 8:20 |
| TBD | Seattle | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| **2020** | 6 |
| **2021** NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 10 |
| **2022** NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME | 13 |
| **2023** SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP | 12 |
| **2024** | 6 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Kyle Shanahan
**Record With Team:** 70-62
**Career Record:** 70-62
**Offensive Coordinator:** Klay Kubiak
**Defensive Coordinator:** Robert Saleh
**Special Teams Coordinator:** Brant Boyer
**Quarterbacks:** Mick Lombardi
**Running Backs:** Robert Turner Jr.
**Wide Receivers/Passing Game Specialist:** Leonard Hankerson
**Tight Ends:** Brian Fleury
**Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Line:** Chris Foerster
**Assistant Head Coach of Defense:** Gus Bradley
**Defensive Line:** Kris Kocurek
**Linebackers:** Johnny Holland
**Defensive Passing Game Specialist/ Defensive Backs:** Daniel Bullocks
**Defensive Backs/Cornerbacks:** Ray Brown

**GEORGE KITTLE**
TIGHT END

KELLEY L COX-IMAGN IMAGES

They have an opening at left guard after Aaron Banks signed with the Packers, and the leading candidates are journeymen Ben Bartch and Matt Hennessy. In addition, their top backup tackle, Jaylon Moore, signed with the Chiefs. The line is a significant issue, especially given Williams' age and injury history.

## DEFENSE

Welcome back, Robert Saleh. Now get to work. This isn't 2017, when Saleh began his four-season 49ers' tenure as a rookie coordinator who inherited the NFL's 32nd-ranked defense. But Saleh is taking over a once-proud unit that declined last year before it got worse in the offseason with the departure of six starters.

The 49ers allowed the fourth-most points in the NFL in 2024, and their run defense turned to mush: They allowed five 100-yard rushers in their final seven games after they hadn't allowed an opponent to hit the century mark in their previous 55 games.

The good news: They still have two of the NFL's best players at their respective positions, pass-rusher Nick Bosa and linebacker Fred Warner, along with ascendant cornerback Deommodore Lenoir. Their draft, which began with the selection of five straight defensive players for the first time since 1981, should fill some holes, although it's risky to count on so many rookies.

The 49ers released three high-priced starting defensive linemen in March, but they hope that they selected their replacements: defensive end Mykel Williams (first round), along with defensive tackles Alfred Collins (second) and C.J. West (fourth). They are also pinning their hopes on another rookie, third-round linebacker Nick Martin, to replace Greenlaw. Martin will compete with 2023 sixth-round pick Dee Winters for the opening, but Winters' inconsistencies led to their selection of Martin.

In the secondary, they want another draft pick, third-rounder Upton Stout, to become their slot corner. If Stout can assume the role, it would allow Lenoir to remain outside after rotating between both positions last year. Lenoir and Renardo Green could become one of the NFL's best young tandems. Last year, Green, a second-round pick, set the franchise rookie record with 13 pass breakups.

Green's emergence made the free-agent departure of All-Pro corner Charvarius Ward less painful. But the loss of All-Pro safety Talanoa Hufanga could sting, given the situation at that position. Malik Mustapha, last year's fourth-round find, had offseason knee surgery and won't be ready for Week 1. Without Mustapha, both starting spots are up for grabs. The candidates include Ji'Ayir Brown, Jason Pinnock and Marques Sigle, a rookie fifth-round pick. That's a theme for the 49ers' defense. And it could be a problem.

## SPECIALISTS

Steady punter Mitch Wishnowsky will return for a seventh season, but it's not clear if kicker Jake Moody will make it to the regular season.

The 2023 third-round pick became NFL's the highest-drafted kicker in seven years, but his job is already in jeopardy after he ranked 32nd in field-goal percentage (70.6) last season. Shanahan has said the 49ers will bring in a veteran to compete with Moody, who returned from a high ankle sprain in November and finished by making 11-of-20 attempts, including 5-of-14 from 40-plus yards.

The 49ers traded one of the NFL's best kickoff returners in Deebo Samuel, who averaged 31.4 yards on 17 runbacks in 2024. And they want to upgrade their punt returns after wideout Jacob Cowing handled those duties in '24. They used a seventh-round pick on Montana wide receiver Junior Bergen, who tied an FCS record with eight career punt-return touchdowns and also had a kickoff-return touchdown.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The days of penciling the 49ers into the postseason appear to be over. But if their collection of standouts can stay relatively healthy and they receive strong contributions from their rookie class, watch out. Their strength of schedule, based on last year's records, is the lowest in the NFL (.415).

## 2024 RESULTS (6-11)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 9 | N.Y. Jets | W | 32-19 |
| Sept. | 15 | at Minnesota | L | 17-23 |
| Sept. | 22 | at L.A. Rams | L | 24-27 |
| Sept. | 29 | New England | W | 30-13 |
| Oct. | 6 | Arizona | L | 23-24 |
| Oct. | 10 | at Seattle | W | 36-24 |
| Oct. | 20 | Kansas City | L | 18-28 |
| Oct. | 27 | Dallas | W | 30-24 |
| Nov. | 10 | at Tampa Bay | W | 3-20 |
| Nov. | 17 | Seattle | L | 17-20 |
| Nov. | 24 | at Green Bay | L | 10-38 |
| Dec. | 1 | at Buffalo | L | 10-35 |
| Dec. | 8 | Chicago | W | 38-13 |
| Dec. | 12 | L.A. Rams | L | 6-12 |
| Dec. | 22 | at Miami | L | 17-29 |
| Dec. | 30 | Detroit | L | 34-40 |
| Jan. | 5 | at Arizona | L | 24-47 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 376.3 | 4 | 3 |
| Rushing | 127.2 | 12 | 8 |
| Passing | 249.1 | 4 | 3 |
| Scoring | 22.9 | T13 | T8 |
| Third Down % | 42.6 | 9 | 5 |
| Points/Play | 0.379 | 13 | 8 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 317.4 | 8 | 3 |
| Rushing | 124.6 | 18 | 8 |
| Passing | 192.8 | 5 | 3 |
| Scoring | 25.6 | 29 | 14 |
| Interceptions | 11 | T19 | T10 |
| Sacks | 37 | T23 | T13 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.424 | 29 | 14 |
| TO Differential | -10 | 27 | 16 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Brock Purdy | 455 | 300 | 3,864 | 20 | 12 |
| Joshua Dobbs | 47 | 32 | 361 | 2 | 2 |
| Brandon Allen | 30 | 17 | 199 | 1 | 2 |

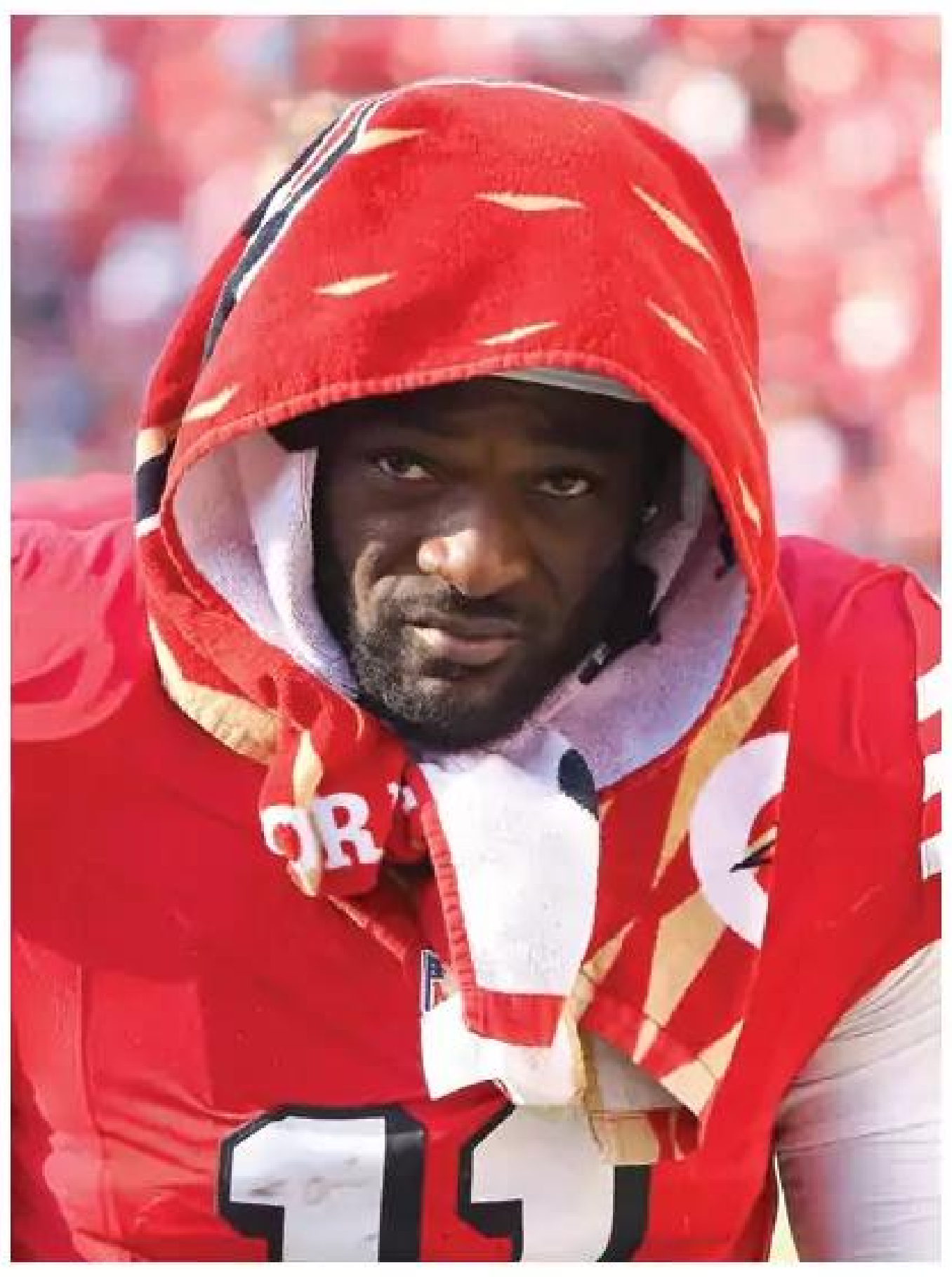
| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jordan Mason | 153 | 789 | 5.2 | 3 |
| Isaac Guerendo | 84 | 420 | 5.0 | 4 |
| Brock Purdy | 66 | 323 | 4.9 | 5 |
| Christian McCaffrey | 50 | 202 | 4.0 | 0 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| George Kittle | 78 | 1,106 | 14.2 | 8 |
| Jauan Jennings | 77 | 975 | 12.7 | 6 |
| Deebo Samuel | 51 | 670 | 13.1 | 3 |
| Ricky Pearsall | 31 | 400 | 12.9 | 3 |
| Brandon Aiyuk | 25 | 374 | 15.0 | 0 |

**KICKING:** Jake Moody, 24-34 FGs, 32-33 PATs, 104 points
**TACKLES:** Fred Warner, 131; Deommodore Lenoir, 85
**SACKS:** Nick Bosa, 9.0; Leonard Floyd, 8.5
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Deommodore Lenoir, 2; Fred Warner, 2

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**ECHOES OF '81** The 49ers used their first five picks on defensive players for the first time since 1981, when they remade their secondary by selecting Hall of Fame safety Ronnie Lott, Pro Bowl cornerback Eric Wright and Pro Bowl safety Carlton Williamson. The trio combined for 10 Super Bowl rings, 13 Pro Bowl appearances and 86 interceptions with the franchise. "That draft was obviously very good to this organization then," general manager John Lynch says. "And we can only pray that this one is as good."



**ODDNESS WITH AIYUK** Months after making a huge investment in All-Pro wide receiver **Brandon Aiyuk**, the 49ers were open to unloading him. Lynch entertained a trade during the offseason despite signing Aiyuk to a four-year, $120 million contract extension shortly before the 2024 season opener. The situation suggests the 49ers have second thoughts about that decision. "There's no regret," Lynch says. "We love Brandon Aiyuk as a football player."

**MONTANA MAN** The 49ers' special teams coaches have connections to the University of Montana. And that led the team to use their final draft pick on off-the-radar Grizzlies wide receiver Junior Bergen, who averaged 16.7 yards on his 68 career punt returns. Bergen will try to make the team as a kick returner after receiving strong recommendations from special teams coordinator Brant Boyer and his assistant, Colt Anderson. Boyer's son, Brayton, is a placekicker at Montana. Anderson also played at Montana.

**ONE THAT GOT AWAY** After tone-setting linebacker Dre Greenlaw agreed to terms on a free-agent contract with the Broncos, Lynch and head coach Kyle Shanahan flew to Texas to meet with him and see if he'd reconsider. But Greenlaw wasn't swayed and signed a three-year, $31.5 million deal with Denver. "We took another shot," Shanahan said, "and we weren't able to get it done."

# SCOUTING THE 49ERS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SAN FRANCISCO

"The way the 49ers scouted, drafted and developed Brock Purdy is a prime example of how ultra-productive football players can be found later in the draft. Purdy has outplayed so many quarterbacks drafted before him. … Now that Christian McCaffrey is healthy again, the 49ers' offense should be back in business. … No one ever thought George Kittle would be traded. It was all gamesmanship. Kittle was always going to wind up back with the 49ers with a big contract. It was inevitable. … Trent Williams is an older tackle, but his hand punch and nasty streak haven't changed at all. … Yes, it's safe to say the Brandon Aiyuk deal hasn't worked out at all like the 49ers hoped it would. … I like the upside with Ricky Pearsall. … Getting fullback Kyle Juszczyk back was a real bonus to their offseason. … Nick Bosa has such an extensive repertoire of pass-rush moves that he's a real problem for any kind of blocking scheme. … Jordan Elliott keeps developing his game. Seen a lot of maturation from him. … Fred Warner is simply the best off-the-ball linebacker in the game. There's no one capable of doing what he does in every category. … Malik Mustapha's medical outlook is encouraging. … Still feels like Deommodore Lenoir is underrated. … As an undersized nickel, Upton Stout checks every box for toughness, coverage ability and special-teams upside. … Having Robert Saleh back as defensive coordinator should give this defense a real boost."

KELLEY L COX-IMAGN IMAGES

## 2025 49ERS VETERAN ROSTER

| | QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Jones, Mac | QB | 6-3 | 220 | 4 | Alabama | FA-Jac-25 | D1-NE-21 |
| 4 | Mordecai, Tanner | QB | 6-2 | 218 | 1 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 13 | Purdy, Brock | QB | 6-1 | 220 | 3 | Iowa State | D7-22 | D7-SF-22 |

| | RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | Abanikanda, Israel | RB | 5-10 | 216 | 2 | Pitt | W-NYJ-24 | D5-NYJ-23 |
| 31 | Guerendo, Isaac | RB | 6-0 | 221 | 1 | Louisville | D4b-24 | D4b-SF-24 |
| 44 | Juszczyk, Kyle | FB | 6-2 | 235 | 12 | Harvard | FA-17 | D4-Bal-13 |
| 23 | McCaffrey, Christian | RB | 5-11 | 210 | 8 | Stanford | T-Car-22 | D1-Car-17 |
| 32 | Taylor Jr., Patrick | RB | 6-2 | 217 | 5 | Memphis | FA-GB-24 | FA-GB-20 |

| | RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Aiyuk, Brandon | WR | 6-0 | 200 | 5 | Arizona State | D1b-20 | D1b-SF-20 |
| 19 | Cowing, Jacob | WR | 5-9 | 171 | 1 | Arizona | D4c-24 | D4c-SF-24 |
| 82 | Dwelley, Ross | TE | 6-5 | 245 | 7 | San Diego | FA-Atl-25 | FA-SF-18 |
| | Farrell, Luke | TE | 6-5 | 250 | 4 | Ohio State | FA-Jac-25 | D5-Jac-21 |
| 84 | Gage Jr., Russell | WR | 6-0 | 184 | 7 | LSU | FA-24 | D6a-Atl-18 |
| 18 | Hodgins, Isaiah | WR | 6-3 | 200 | 4 | Oregon State | FA-25 | D6b-Buf-20 |
| 15 | Jennings, Jauan | WR | 6-3 | 212 | 4 | Tennessee | D7-20 | D7-SF-20 |
| 85 | Kittle, George | TE | 6-4 | 250 | 8 | Iowa | D5a-17 | D5a-SF-17 |
| 83 | Owens, Terique | WR | 6-3 | 200 | 1 | Missouri State | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 1 | Pearsall, Ricky | WR | 6-1 | 189 | 1 | Florida | D1-24 | D1-SF-24 |
| 89 | Pline, Mason | TE | 6-7 | 260 | 1 | Furman | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 5 | Robinson, Demarcus | WR | 6-1 | 203 | 9 | Florida | FA-LAR-25 | D4-KC-16 |
| 81 | Taylor, Trent | WR | 5-8 | 180 | 8 | Louisiana Tech | FA-Chi-24 | D5-SF-17 |
| 88 | Tonges, Jake | TE | 6-4 | 240 | 2 | Cal | FA-23 | FA-Chi-22 |
| 9 | Willis, Brayden | TE | 6-4 | 240 | 2 | Oklahoma | D7a-23 | D7a-SF-23 |

| | OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 67 | Alarcon, Isaac | OL | 6-7 | 320 | 1 | Monterrey Institute | FA-24 | FA-Dal-20 |
| 78 | Bartch, Ben | OL | 6-6 | 315 | 5 | St. John's (MN) | FA-23 | D4-Jac-20 |
| 64 | Brendel, Jake | OL | 6-4 | 299 | 7 | UCLA | FA-20 | FA-Dal-16 |
| 74 | Burford, Spencer | OL | 6-4 | 300 | 3 | UTSA | D4-22 | D4-SF-22 |
| | Dillard, Andre | T | 6-5 | 315 | 6 | Washington State | FA-GB-25 | D1-Phi-19 |
| 60 | Gutierrez, Sebastian | OL | 6-5 | 308 | 1 | Minot State | FA-23 | FA-Den-22 |
| 61 | Hennessy, Matt | OL | 6-3 | 315 | 5 | Temple | FA-24 | D3-Atl-20 |
| | Humphries, D.J. | OL | 6-5 | 307 | 9 | Florida | FA-KC-25 | D1-Ari-15 |
| 69 | Johnson, Zack | OL | 6-6 | 301 | 1 | North Dakota St. | FA-25 | FA-GB-20 |
| 68 | McKivitz, Colton | OL | 6-6 | 301 | 5 | West Virginia | D5-20 | D5-SF-20 |
| 66 | Nugent, Drake | OL | 6-1 | 300 | 1 | Michigan | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| | Petit-Frere, Nicholas | OL | 6-5 | 316 | 3 | Ohio State | FA-Ten-25 | D3a-Ten-22 |
| 62 | Pleasants, Austen | OL | 6-7 | 330 | 2 | Ohio | FA-24 | FA-Jac-20 |
| 77 | Puni, Dominick | OL | 6-5 | 313 | 1 | Kansas | D3-24 | D3-SF-24 |
| 71 | Williams, Trent | OL | 6-5 | 320 | 15 | Oklahoma | T-Was-20 | D1-Was-10 |
| 63 | Zakelj, Nick | OL | 6-6 | 316 | 3 | Fordham | D6a-22 | D6a-SF-22 |

| | DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 69 | Anderson, Evan | DL | 6-3 | 326 | 1 | Florida Atlantic | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 58 | Barrett, Alex | DL | 6-2 | 250 | 2 | San Diego State | FA-19 | FA-Det-17 |
| 51 | Beal Jr., Robert | DL | 6-4 | 250 | 2 | Georgia | D5b-23 | D5b-SF-23 |
| 97 | Bosa, Nick | DL | 6-4 | 266 | 6 | Ohio State | D1-19 | D1-SF-19 |
| 93 | Davis, Kalia | DL | 6-2 | 310 | 3 | UCF | D6b-22 | D6b-SF-22 |
| 92 | Elliott, Jordan | DL | 6-4 | 303 | 5 | Missouri | FA-Cle-24 | D3a-Cle-20 |
| 96 | Garvin, Jonathan | DL | 6-4 | 257 | 4 | Miami (Fla.) | FA-24 | D7-GB-20 |
| 90 | Givens, Kevin | DL | 6-1 | 285 | 5 | Penn State | FA-19 | FA-SF-19 |
| 94 | Gross-Matos, Yetur | DL | 6-5 | 265 | 5 | Penn State | FA-24 | D2-Car-20 |
| 59 | Jackson, Tarron | DL | 6-2 | 254 | 3 | Coastal Carolina | FA-25 | D6b-Phi-21 |
| 91 | Okuayinonu, Sam | DL | 6-1 | 269 | 2 | Maryland | FA-23 | FA-Ten-22 |

| | LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 48 | Bethune, Tatum | LB | 6-1 | 230 | 1 | Florida State | D7-24 | D7-SF-24 |
| 57 | Gifford, Luke | LB | 6-3 | 243 | 6 | Nebraska | FA-Ten-25 | FA-Dal-19 |
| 41 | Graham, Jalen | LB | 6-3 | 220 | 2 | Purdue | D7c-23 | D7c-SF-23 |
| 36 | Robinson, Curtis | LB | 6-3 | 235 | 3 | Stanford | FA-21 | FA-Den-21 |
| 54 | Warner, Fred | LB | 6-3 | 230 | 7 | BYU | D3a-18 | D3a-SF-18 |
| 47 | White, DaShaun | LB | 6-0 | 218 | 1 | Oklahoma | FA-24 | FA-Buf-23 |
| 53 | Winters, Dee | LB | 5-11 | 227 | 2 | TCU | D6-23 | D6-SF-23 |

| | DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Brown, Ji'Ayir | S | 5-11 | 202 | 2 | Penn State | D3a-23 | D3a-SF-23 |
| | Brown, Tre | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 4 | Oklahoma | FA-Sea-25 | D4-Sea-21 |
| | Flowers, Dallis | CB | 6-1 | 196 | 3 | Pittsburg State | FA-25 | FA-Ind-22 |
| 24 | Grant, Richie | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | UCF | FA-Atl-25 | D2-Atl-21 |
| 0 | Green, Renardo | CB | 6-0 | 186 | 1 | Florida State | D2-24 | D2-SF-24 |
| 2 | Lenoir, Deommodore | DB | 5-10 | 200 | 4 | Oregon | D5b-21 | D5b-SF-21 |
| 26 | Lucas, Chase | CB | 5-11 | 184 | 4 | Arizona State | FA-Det-24 | D7-Det-22 |
| 28 | Luter Jr., Darrell | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 2 | South Alabama | D5a-23 | D5a-SF-23 |
| 38 | Mahoney, Jaylen | S | 5-11 | 200 | 1 | Vanderbilt | FA-24 | FA-SF-24 |
| 6 | Mustapha, Malik | S | 5-10 | 206 | 1 | Wake Forest | D4a-24 | D4a-SF-24 |
| 33 | Neal, Siran | CB | 6-0 | 206 | 7 | Jacksonville State | FA-Mia-25 | D5a-Buf-18 |
| 30 | Odum, George | S | 6-1 | 202 | 7 | Central Arkansas | FA-Ind-22 | FA-Ind-18 |
| 25 | Pinnock, Jason | S | 6-0 | 200 | 4 | Pitt | FA-NYG-25 | D5c-NYJ-21 |

| | SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Moody, Jake | K | 6-1 | 210 | 2 | Michigan | D3b-23 | D3b-SF-23 |
| 46 | Weeks, Jon | LS | 5-10 | 242 | 15 | Baylor | FA-Hou-25 | FA-Hou-10 |
| 3 | Wishnowsky, Mitch | P | 6-2 | 220 | 6 | Utah | D4-19 | D4-SF-19 |

## OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

### OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 15 | Jauan Jennings | 1 | Ricky Pearsall |
| WR | 11 | Brandon Aiyuk | 5 | Demarcus Robinson |
| LT | 71 | Trent Williams | 62 | Austen Pleasants |
| LG | 78 | Ben Bartch | 61 | Matt Hennessy |
| C | 64 | Jake Brendel | 63 | Nick Zakelj |
| RG | 77 | Dominick Puni | 75 | Connor Colby (R) |
| RT | 68 | Colton McKivitz | 74 | Spencer Burford |
| TE | 85 | George Kittle | | Luke Farrell |
| QB | 13 | Brock Purdy | 10 | Mac Jones |
| RB | 23 | Christian McCaffrey | 31 | Isaac Guerendo |
| FB | 44 | Kyle Juszczyk | | |

### DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 97 | Nick Bosa | 94 | Yetur Gross-Matos |
| DT | 92 | Jordan Elliott | 50 | C.J. West (R) |
| DT | 99 | Alfred Collins (R) | 90 | Kevin Givens |
| DE | 98 | Mykel Williams (R) | 91 | Sam Okuayinonu |
| SLB | 45 | Nick Martin (R) | 57 | Luke Gifford |
| MLB | 54 | Fred Warner | 48 | Tatum Bethune |
| WLB | 53 | Dee Winters | 41 | Jalen Graham |
| CB | 2 | Deommodore Lenoir | 20 | Upton Stout (R) |
| CB | 0 | Renardo Green | | Tre Brown |
| SS | 27 | Ji'Ayir Brown | 36 | Marques Sigle (R) |
| FS | 6 | Malik Mustapha | 25 | Jason Pinnock |

### SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 4 | Jake Moody | KR | 31 | Isaac Guerendo |
| P | 3 | Mitch Wishnowsky | PR | 19 | Jacob Cowing |

**13.3%**

George Kittle led all tight ends with a 13.3% catch rate over expected per NFL Next Gen Stats.

## 49ERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mykel Williams | DE | 6-5 | 260 | Georgia |
| 2 | Alfred Collins | DT | 6-6 | 332 | Texas |
| 3 | Nick Martin | LB | 6-1 | 234 | Oklahoma State |
| 3 | Upton Stout | CB | 5-9 | 181 | WKU |
| 4 | C.J. West | DT | 6-1 | 316 | Indiana |
| 4 | Jordan Watkins | WR | 5-11 | 196 | Ole Miss |
| 5 | Jordan James | RB | 5-10 | 208 | Oregon |
| 5 | Marques Sigle | S | 5-11 | 199 | Kansas State |
| 7 | Kurtis Rourke | QB | 6-5 | 231 | Indiana |
| 7 | Connor Colby | G | 6-6 | 309 | Iowa |
| 7 | Junior Bergen | WR | 5-10 | 184 | Montana |

General manager John Lynch wanted to recreate the size and length the 49ers had with former twin-tower defensive linemen DeForest Buckner and Arik Armstead, and he was practically swooning over their first two plus-sized picks, Mykel Williams and Alfred Collins. But the 49ers' next two picks, Nick Martin and Upton Stout, are undersized and, according to analysts, over-drafted. C.J. West, known for shoot-the-gaps quickness, and Jordan James, hailed for hard-nosed decisiveness, could be excellent scheme fits. After hitting on Brock Purdy, it was worth buying another seventh-round lottery ticket with Kurtis Rourke. Connor Colby was the only offensive lineman the 49ers drafted.

# SEAHAWKS

## 2025 SCHEDULE

| Date | Opponent | Time |
|---|---|---|
| Sept. 7 | San Francisco | 4:05 |
| Sept. 14 | at Pittsburgh | 1:00 |
| Sept. 21 | New Orleans | 4:05 |
| Sept. 25 | at Arizona | 8:15 |
| Oct. 5 | Tampa Bay | 4:05 |
| Oct. 12 | at Jacksonville | 1:00 |
| Oct. 20 | Houston | 10:00 |
| Oct. 26 | BYE | |
| Nov. 2 | at Washington | 8:20 |
| Nov. 9 | Arizona | 4:05 |
| Nov. 16 | at L.A. Rams | 4:05 |
| Nov. 23 | at Tennessee | 1:00 |
| Nov. 30 | Minnesota | 4:05 |
| Dec. 7 | at Atlanta | 1:00 |
| Dec. 14 | Indianapolis | 4:25 |
| Dec. 18 | L.A. Rams | 8:15 |
| TBD | at Carolina | |
| TBD | at San Francisco | |

*All times Eastern*

## FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

| | |
|---|---|
| 2020 NFC PLAYOFFS | 12 |
| 2021 | 7 |
| 2022 | 9 |
| 2023 | 9 |
| 2024 | 10 |

## THE COACHES

**Head Coach:** Mike Macdonald
**Record With Team:** 10-7
**Career Record:** 10-7
**Offensive Coordinator:** Klint Kubiak
**Defensive Coordinator:** Aden Durde
**Special Teams Coord.:** Jay Harbaugh
**Assistant Head Coach:** Leslie Frazier
**Quarterbacks:** Andrew Janocko
**Running Backs:** Kennedy Polamalu
**Wide Receivers:** Frisman Jackson
**Tight Ends:** Mack Brown
**Offensive Passing Game Coord.:** Jake Peetz
**Offensive Line:** John Benton
**Run Game Coordinator/Senior Offensive Assistant:** Rick Dennison
**Defensive Line:** Justin Hinds
**Inside Linebackers:** Kirk Olivadotti
**Outside Linebackers:** Chris Partridge
**Defensive Backs:** Karl Scott
**Safeties:** Jeff Howard

NFC WEST FORECAST
2

Head coach Mike Macdonald's first year at the helm of the Seattle Seahawks had its ups and downs. Although they finished at 10-7, they became the first team since the 2020 Miami Dolphins to miss the playoffs after reaching double-digit wins, which caused a lot of frustration among the fan base, especially after a 3-6 home record, and resulted in some major changes in personnel.

### OFFENSE

"Facelift" may be a bit of an understatement when describing the Seahawks' new offense. Quarterback Geno Smith, wide receivers Tyler Lockett and DK Metcalf and offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb are out, with Sam Darnold, Cooper Kupp and Clint Kubiak, respectively, set to take their places.

The identity of the offense should remain the same, with running backs Kenneth Walker III and Zach Charbonnet as the focal points after the pair received a combined 376 touches in 2024. But with Darnold receiving a hefty $110.5 million contract to take over for Smith, he's going to need to prove that he can be successful outside of Kevin O'Connell's system in Minnesota.

Darnold has a nice pair of security blankets in Kupp and Jaxon Smith-Njigba. General manager John Schneider snagged Kupp from the Seahawks' division rivals, the Los Angeles Rams, and signed him to a three-year, $45 million deal. If healthy, he should be an effective complement to Smith-Njigba, the third-year product of Ohio State who exceeded 1,100 receiving yards and made the Pro Bowl last season.

However, staying healthy has proven to be a challenge for Kupp, the 2021 Offensive Player of the Year. Since 2022, Kupp has missed 18 games, and in a room that has little proven depth behind Smith-Njigba, free-agent signee Marquez Valdes-Scantling and former undrafted free agent Jake Bobo, Kupp's health will be critical to Seattle's offensive success. Keep an eye on fifth-round pick Tory Horton, who ran a 4.41 40-yard dash during the pre-draft process and was very productive at Colorado State in his final season. He could rise up the depth chart quickly.

Kubiak is going to need a bounce-back season from the offensive line, which was one of the league's worst units in 2024, allowing 54 sacks, tied for the third-most in the NFL. Right tackle Abraham Lucas has missed 21 games in the past two seasons after a strong start to his career in 2022, and the Seahawks haven't been able to find much depth behind him. Selecting interior offensive lineman Grey Zabel in the first round out of North Dakota State was a solid move to begin shoring up the unit, which is also hoping for a boost from UConn product Christian Haynes, a third-round pick in 2024.

"I like how he finishes the blocks, then finding his targets down the field in space," Macdonald said of Zabel after he was selected. "He's a really great athlete, how he moves. It's easy to overlook pass protection when you talk wide zone all the time. You can argue that's really where it starts in the evaluation process. Hard to find a rep that he had a hard time winning down [at the Senior Bowl] in Mobile. He took a lot of them."

### DEFENSE

Anchored by a strong defensive line and one of the best cornerbacks in the league, the Seahawks should be relatively steady on that side of the ball thanks to Macdonald's scheme.

**JAXON SMITH-NJIGBA**
WIDE RECEIVER

EAMON HORWEDEL-IMAGN IMAGES

Up front, last year's first-rounder Byron Murphy II looked the part of a game-wrecking defensive tackle, even while dealing with an injury that sidelined him for three games. Although he tallied just half a sack and two tackles for a loss, Murphy was consistently in the backfield and required plenty of attention from opposing offensive lines, leading to a very productive season for Leonard Williams.

In his first full season with the Seahawks, Williams came up just short of his career-high with 11 sacks as he made his second Pro Bowl appearance after signing a three-year, $64.5 million deal to stay in Seattle. Schneider also gave the unit a big boost in free agency, bringing in former Cowboys pass-rusher DeMarcus Lawrence, who didn't mince words after spending 11 years in Dallas.

"A change of scenery is always good, but, you know, Dallas is my home," Lawrence said after he signed. "I made my home there. My family lives there. I'm forever gonna be there, but I know for sure I'm not gonna win a Super Bowl there. We here."

In the secondary, cornerback Devon Witherspoon, who earned his second Pro Bowl nod in as many seasons in the league in 2024, has quickly developed a reputation as a shutdown corner. The 2022 top-five pick out of Illinois has broken up 25 passes in his career; in doing so, he presents a lot of opportunities for his running mate, Riq Woolen. Woolen, the former fifth-round pick out of UTSA, pulled in three interceptions and was credited with 14 pass breakups last season, and as he heads into a contract year, he will be looking to produce at a high level. With safeties Julian Love and second-round pick Nick Emmanwori patrolling the back end, Woolen will have plenty of wiggle room to show that he's not afraid to be aggressive and make a play on the ball.

Linebacker play is critical to Macdonald's scheme, and after trading for inside 'backer Ernest Jones IV from the Tennessee Titans, Schneider made the right move signing Jones to a three-year, $28.5 million deal. In just 10 games with the Seahawks, Jones racked up 94 tackles and an interception as Seattle finished the year ranked No. 14 in total defense.

## SPECIALISTS

The Seahawks have boasted some of the most consistent special teams play in the NFL in recent seasons. Placekicker Jason Myers is entering his seventh year with the team after converting on 86.7% of his field-goal attempts last season. Punter Michael Dickson is entering his eighth year with the team after averaging 49.4 yards per punt in 2024.

## FINAL ANALYSIS

The NFC West wasn't nearly as tough in 2024 as it had been in previous seasons, and heading into this season, the Seahawks have a great opportunity to take advantage of the division. They should have their sights set on the playoffs, and if they improve on their record at Lumen Field, they could very well end up as the division champions if they can overcome the growing pains of so many new faces in critical places.

## 2024 RESULTS (10-7)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sept. | 8 | Denver | W | 26-20 |
| Sept. | 15 | at New England (ot) | W | 23-20 |
| Sept. | 22 | Miami | W | 24-3 |
| Sept. | 30 | at Detroit | L | 29-42 |
| Oct. | 6 | N.Y. Giants | L | 20-29 |
| Oct. | 10 | San Francisco | L | 24-36 |
| Oct. | 20 | at Atlanta | W | 34-14 |
| Oct. | 27 | Buffalo | L | 10-31 |
| Nov. | 3 | L.A. Rams (ot) | L | 20-26 |
| Nov. | 17 | at San Francisco | W | 20-17 |
| Nov. | 24 | Arizona | W | 16-6 |
| Dec | 1 | at N.Y. Jets | W | 26-21 |
| Dec. | 8 | at Arizona | W | 30-18 |
| Dec. | 15 | Green Bay | L | 13-30 |
| Dec. | 22 | Minnesota | L | 24-27 |
| Dec. | 26 | at Chicago | W | 6-3 |
| Jan. | 5 | at L.A. Rams | W | 30-25 |

## 2024 TEAM STATS

| TEAM OFFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 332.2 | 14 | 10 |
| Rushing | 95.7 | 28 | 16 |
| Passing | 236.5 | 8 | 6 |
| Scoring | 22.1 | 18 | 10 |
| Third Down % | 37.6 | 21 | 10 |
| Points/Play | 0.364 | 15 | 9 |

| TEAM DEFENSE | Stat | NFL Rank | NFC Rank |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 332.7 | 14 | 5 |
| Rushing | 120.8 | 16 | 7 |
| Passing | 211.9 | 11 | 5 |
| Scoring | 21.6 | T11 | 5 |
| Interceptions | 13 | T12 | T5 |
| Sacks | 45 | T8 | T4 |
| Opp. Pts./Play | 0.346 | 9 | 4 |
| TO Differential | -6 | T23 | T12 |

## 2024 INDIVIDUAL STATS

| PASSING | ATT | COMP | YDS | TD | INT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Geno Smith | 578 | 407 | 4,320 | 21 | 15 |

| RUSHING | ATT | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kenneth Walker III | 153 | 573 | 3.7 | 7 |
| Zach Charbonnet | 135 | 569 | 4.2 | 8 |
| Geno Smith | 53 | 272 | 5.1 | 2 |

| RECEIVING | REC | YDS | AVG | TD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jaxon Smith-Njigba | 100 | 1,130 | 11.3 | 6 |
| DK Metcalf | 66 | 992 | 15.0 | 5 |
| Tyler Lockett | 49 | 600 | 12.2 | 2 |
| Noah Fant | 48 | 500 | 10.4 | 1 |
| Kenneth Walker III | 46 | 299 | 6.5 | 1 |
| Zach Charbonnet | 42 | 340 | 8.1 | 1 |
| AJ Barner | 30 | 245 | 8.2 | 4 |

**KICKING:** Jason Myers, 26-30 FGs, 37-40 PATs, 115 points
**TACKLES:** Julian Love, 109; Devon Witherspoon, 98
**SACKS:** Leonard Williams, 11.0; Derick Hall, 8.0
**INTERCEPTIONS:** Coby Bryant, 3; Julian Love, 3; Riq Woolen, 3

# OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

**TWO-SPORT STAR** Before he committed to football full time at North Dakota State, first-round pick Grey Zabel was a star pitcher in high school and may have had a future on the mound had he chosen to continue baseball. He reportedly had a fastball that sat in the low 90s and held a 0.68 earned run average during his senior season. Maybe he should give the Seattle Mariners a call; they have one of the best pitching staffs in MLB.

MARK J. REBILAS-IMAGN IMAGES

**COMING HOME** For wide receiver **Cooper Kupp**, who had spent his entire eight-year career with the Los Angeles Rams, signing with the Seahawks is a homecoming of sorts. He was born and raised in Yakima, Washington, and played his college ball at Eastern Washington University in Chaney, where he set FCS records for catches (428) and receiving yards (6,464) over his four seasons with the Eagles, who play on a distinctive red turf field.

**REUNITED AND IT FEELS SO GOOD** Behind Sam Darnold, the Seahawks re-signed veteran quarterback Drew Lock, whom Seattle acquired from the Denver Broncos as part of the Russell Wilson trade in 2022. Lock and Darnold have been friends since their high school days. “We were roommates at the Army All-American Bowl, then did the Elite 11 camps together,” Darnold said. “Then when I was coming out, I trained out in California with Jordan Palmer and my quarterback coach back home, Justin Hoover, and Sam was always around. So we stayed in touch over the years. He’s a great dude, and I’m excited to be in a room with him. … I know what type of person he is. It’s cool.”

**BOWLING OVER THE COMPETITION** Some may describe running back Zach Charbonnet as a bowling ball on the field, which is a great comparison since bowling is one of his favorite hobbies. The 2023 second-round pick out of UCLA plays so much that he got fitted for a custom ball.

# SCOUTING THE SEAHAWKS

### OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SEATTLE

“It’s a lot of change in the Pacific Northwest. New starting quarterback in Sam Darnold, new No. 1 wide receiver in Cooper Kupp and a new offensive coordinator in Klint Kubiak. … Starting with Darnold, they have a good chance to run the Kubiak system. He’s accurate, adept at play-action fakes and has some mobility. … Kupp returns to his home state and is supremely motivated to show that the Rams were wrong to give up on him. … Kubiak has a lot of good ideas and a strong background learned from his father, Gary Kubiak, and other older coaches. … They’ll undoubtedly miss DK Metcalf, but the other wide receivers are capable, especially Jaxon Smith-Njigba. … Charles Cross is going to be a very rich man one day. It’s hard to find left tackles like him. … Grey Zabel is making a big leap from North Dakota State, but he showed me all I needed to see at the Senior Bowl. … Noah Fant gives Darnold a reliable intermediate option. … Kenneth Walker III should be on those ‘Angry Run of the Year’ award lists. He’s great at breaking tackles. … There’s a lot to appreciate about this defensive line with Leonard Williams, Byron Murphy II, Jarran Reed and, now, DeMarcus Lawrence. … Earnest Jones IV doesn’t really get a lot of love nationally, but he’s one of the better linebackers. … Riq Woolen has got it all: length, speed, reactions, backpedal, vertical leap. … When they signed Julian Love a few years ago, the Seahawks got faster and smarter in their secondary. He’s lived up to expectations and then some.”

# 2025 SEAHAWKS VETERAN ROSTER

| QUARTERBACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 Darnold, Sam | QB | 6-3 | 225 | 7 | USC | FA-Min-25 | D1-NYJ-18 |
| 2 Lock, Drew | QB | 6-4 | 228 | 6 | Missouri | FA-NYG-25 | D2b-Den-19 |
| 17 Plumlee, John Rhys | QB | 6-0 | 200 | 1 | UCF | FA-24 | FA-Pit-24 |

| RUNNING BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 Charbonnet, Zach | RB | 6-1 | 220 | 2 | UCLA | D2b-23 | D2b-Sea-23 |
| 36 Holani, George | RB | 5-10 | 208 | 1 | Boise State | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |
| 25 McIntosh, Kenny | RB | 6-0 | 211 | 2 | Georgia | D7-23 | D7-Sea-23 |
| 9 Walker III, Kenneth | RB | 5-9 | 216 | 3 | Michigan State | D2b-22 | D2b-Sea-22 |

| RECEIVERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 88 Barner, AJ | TE | 6-6 | 251 | 1 | Michigan | D4b-24 | D4b-Sea-24 |
| 19 Bobo, Jake | WR | 6-4 | 211 | 2 | Duke | FA-23 | FA-Sea-23 |
| 87 Fant, Noah | TE | 6-4 | 249 | 6 | Iowa | T-Den-22 | D1-Den-19 |
| 10 Kupp, Cooper | WR | 6-2 | 207 | 8 | Eastern Washington | FA-LAR-25 | D3a-LAR-17 |
| 38 Russell, Brady | TE | 6-3 | 250 | 2 | Colorado | PS-Phi-23 | FA-Phi-23 |
| 81 Saubert, Eric | TE | 6-5 | 248 | 8 | Drake | FA-SF-25 | D5-Atl-17 |
| 84 Sims, Steven | WR | 5-10 | 176 | 4 | Kansas | FA-Bal-25 | FA-Was-19 |
| 11 Smith-Njigba, Jaxon | WR | 6-0 | 202 | 2 | Ohio State | D1b-23 | D1b-Sea-23 |
| 1 Valdes-Scantling, M. | WR | 6-4 | 206 | 7 | South Florida | FA-NO-25 | D5c-GB-18 |
| 82 White, Cody | WR | 6-3 | 227 | 5 | Michigan State | FA-23 | FA-KC-20 |
| 83 Young, Dareke | WR | 6-2 | 225 | 3 | Lenoir-Rhyne | D7b-22 | D7b-Sea-22 |

| OFFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 70 Aumavae-Laulu, M. | G/T | 6-5 | 344 | 2 | Oregon | FA-25 | D6-Bal-23 |
| 75 Bradford, Anthony | G | 6-4 | 335 | 2 | LSU | D4a-23 | D4a-Sea-23 |
| 67 Cross, Charles | T | 6-5 | 317 | 3 | Mississippi State | D1-22 | D1-Sea-22 |
| 64 Haynes, Christian | G | 6-3 | 317 | 1 | UConn | D3-24 | D3-Sea-24 |
| 65 Jerrell, Michael | T | 6-5 | 309 | 1 | Findlay | D6c-24 | D6c-Sea-24 |
| 74 Jones, Josh | G/T | 6-7 | 339 | 5 | Houston | FA-Bal-25 | D3-Ari-20 |
| 63 Laumea, Sataoa | G | 6-4 | 319 | 1 | Utah | D6a-24 | D6a-Sea-24 |
| 72 Lucas, Abraham | T | 6-6 | 322 | 3 | Washington State | D3-22 | D3-Sea-22 |
| 55 Oluwatimi, Olu | C | 6-2 | 309 | 2 | Michigan | D5b-23 | D5b-Sea-23 |
| 61 Sundell, Jalen | C | 6-5 | 301 | 1 | North Dakota St. | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |

| DEFENSIVE LINEMEN | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 95 Adams, Myles | DE | 6-2 | 300 | 5 | Rice | FA-20 | FA-Car-20 |
| 92 Bohanna, Quinton | DT | 6-4 | 355 | 4 | Kentucky | FA-24 | D6-Dal-21 |
| 97 Hankins, Johnathan | NT | 6-3 | 335 | 12 | Ohio State | FA-Dal-24 | D2-NYG-13 |
| 0 Lawrence, DeMarcus | DE | 6-3 | 254 | 11 | Boise State | FA-Dal-25 | D2-Dal-14 |
| 56 Levelston, DeVere | DE | 6-3 | 281 | 1 | SMU | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |
| 53 Mafe, Boye | DE | 6-4 | 261 | 3 | Minnesota | D2a-22 | D2a-Sea-22 |
| 94 Morris, Mike | DE | 6-6 | 306 | 2 | Michigan | D5a-23 | D5a-Sea-23 |
| 91 Murphy II, Byron | DT | 6-0 | 306 | 1 | Texas | D1-24 | D1-Sea-24 |
| 10 Nwosu, Uchenna | DE | 6-2 | 265 | 7 | USC | FA-LAC-22 | D2-LAC-18 |
| 95 Pili, Brandon | NT | 6-3 | 334 | 2 | USC | W-Mia-24 | FA-Mia-23 |
| 90 Reed, Jarran | NT | 6-3 | 315 | 9 | Alabama | D2-16 | D2-Sea-16 |
| 99 Williams, Leonard | DE | 6-5 | 310 | 10 | USC | T-NYG-23 | D1-NYJ-15 |

| LINEBACKERS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 58 Hall, Derick | LB | 6-3 | 260 | 2 | Auburn | D2a-23 | D2a-Sea-23 |
| 13 Jones IV, Ernest | LB | 6-2 | 233 | 4 | South Carolina | T-Ten-24 | D3-Ten-21 |
| 48 Knight, Tyrice | LB | 6-0 | 233 | 1 | UTEP | D4a-24 | D4a-Sea-24 |
| 52 O'Connell, Patrick | LB | 6-1 | 231 | 2 | Montana | FA-23 | FA-Sea-23 |
| 47 Ross, Josh | LB | 6-0 | 229 | 3 | Michigan | W-Bal-24 | FA-Bal-22 |
| 44 Sheriff, Jamie | LB | 6-1 | 254 | 1 | South Alabama | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |
| 59 Smith, Tyreke | LB | 6-3 | 255 | 3 | Ohio State | FA-24 | D5-Sea-22 |
| 42 Thomas, Drake | LB | 5-11 | 228 | 2 | NC State | W-LV-23 | FA-LV-23 |

| DEFENSIVE BACKS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 23 Bell, D'Anthony | S | 6-1 | 211 | 3 | West Florida | FA-Cle-25 | FA-Cle-22 |
| 8 Bryant, Coby | S | 6-1 | 205 | 3 | Cincinnati | D4-22 | D4-Sea-22 |
| 33 Hall, Tyler | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 4 | Wyoming | FA-25 | FA-Atl-20 |
| 30 Hicks, Faion | CB | 5-10 | 192 | 3 | Wisconsin | FA-24 | D7-Den-22 |
| 34 Jean-Charles, Shemar | CB | 5-10 | 184 | 4 | Appalachian State | FA-NO-25 | D5-GB-21 |
| 29 Jobe, Josh | CB | 5-11 | 190 | 3 | Alabama | FA-24 | FA-Phi-22 |
| 20 Love, Julian | S | 5-11 | 195 | 6 | Notre Dame | FA-NYG-23 | D4-NYG-19 |
| 39 Okada, Ty | S | 5-11 | 200 | 2 | Montana State | FA-23 | FA-Sea-23 |
| 28 Pritchett, Nehemiah | CB | 6-0 | 190 | 1 | Auburn | D5-24 | D5-Sea-24 |
| 32 Reed II, Jerrick | S | 5-9 | 197 | 2 | New Mexico | D6-23 | D6-Sea-23 |
| 37 Williams, Damarion | CB | 5-10 | 183 | 3 | Houston | FA-24 | D4-Bal-22 |
| 33 Williams, Dee | CB | 5-10 | 190 | 1 | Tennessee | FA-24 | FA-Sea-24 |
| 21 Witherspoon, Devon | CB | 6-0 | 185 | 2 | Illinois | D1a-23 | D1a-Sea-23 |
| 35 Woods, JT | S | 6-2 | 195 | 3 | Baylor | FA-25 | D3-LAC-22 |
| 27 Woolen, Riq | CB | 6-4 | 210 | 3 | UTSA | D5a-22 | D5a-Sea-22 |

| SPECIALISTS | POS | HT | WT | EXP | COLLEGE | ACQUIRED | ENTRY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 Dickson, Michael | P | 6-2 | 208 | 7 | Texas | D5c-18 | D5c-Sea-18 |
| 5 Myers, Jason | K | 5-10 | 190 | 10 | Marist | FA-NYJ-19 | FA-Jac-15 |
| 41 Stoll, Chris | LS | 6-2 | 255 | 2 | Penn State | FA-23 | FA-Sea-23 |

# OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

## OFFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WR | 11 | Jaxon Smith-Njigba | 19 | Jake Bobo |
| WR | 10 | Cooper Kupp | 15 | Tory Horton (R) |
| WR | 1 | Marquez Valdes-Scantling | 85 | River Cracraft |
| LT | 67 | Charles Cross | 74 | Josh Jones |
| LG | 76 | Gray Zabel (R) | 77 | Bryce Cabeldue (R) |
| C | 55 | Olu Oluwatmi | 61 | Jalen Sundell |
| RG | 64 | Christian Haynes | 78 | Mason Richman (R) |
| RT | 72 | Abraham Lucas | 65 | Michael Jerrell |
| TE | 87 | Noah Fant | 18 | Elijah Arroyo (R) |
| QB | 14 | Sam Darnold | 2 | Drew Lock |
| RB | 9 | Kenneth Walker III | 26 | Zach Charbonnet |

## DEFENSE

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DE | 99 | Leonard Williams | 7 | Uchenna Nwosu |
| DT | 91 | Byron Murphy II | 95 | Brandon Pili |
| DT | 90 | Jarran Reed | 94 | Mike Morris |
| DE | 0 | DeMarcus Lawrence | 53 | Boye Mafe |
| MLB | 13 | Ernest Jones IV | 47 | Josh Ross |
| WLB | 48 | Tyrice Knight | 42 | Drake Thomas |
| CB | 29 | Josh Jobe | 28 | Nehemiah Pritchett |
| CB | 27 | Riq Woolen | 34 | Shemar Jean-Charles |
| NB | 21 | Devon Witherspoon | 37 | Damarion Williams |
| SS | 3 | Nick Emmanwori (R) | 23 | D'Anthony Bell |
| FS | 20 | Julian Love | 8 | Coby Bryant |

## SPECIALISTS

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| K | 5 | Jason Myers | KR | 26 | Zach Charbonnet |
| P | 4 | Michael Dickson | PR | 84 | Steven Sims |

**39.4%**

Sam Darnold was pressured on 39.4% of his dropbacks, the third-highest rate in the NFL, per NFL Next Gen Stats. He was the only quarterback pressured on more than 37% of his dropbacks to have a positive EPA in 2024.

# SEAHAWKS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A+

| RD | PLAYER | POS | HT | WT | COLLEGE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Grey Zabel | G | 6-6 | 316 | North Dakota State |
| 2 | Nick Emmanwori | S | 6-3 | 220 | South Carolina |
| 2 | Elijah Arroyo | TE | 6-5 | 254 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 3 | Jalen Milroe | QB | 6-2 | 216 | Alabama |
| 5 | Rylie Mills | DL | 6-5 | 290 | Notre Dame |
| 5 | Tory Horton | WR | 6-2 | 196 | Colorado State |
| 5 | Robbie Ouzts | FB | 6-3 | 274 | Alabama |
| 6 | Bryce Cabeldue | G | 6-4 | 306 | Kansas |
| 7 | Damien Martinez | RB | 6-0 | 217 | Miami (Fla.) |
| 7 | Mason Richman | G | 6-5 | 307 | Iowa |
| 7 | Ricky White III | WR | 6-1 | 184 | UNLV |

This was a very strong draft for general manager John Schneider. At the top, he added the best player available (Grey Zabel) at the team's biggest position of need (offensive line), and followed it up by taking a ton of high-upside athletes who can find various ways to contribute. Nick Emmanwori has the athletic potential to become one of the best defensive backs in this draft class, while quarterback Jalen Milroe could develop well in the right system and be a viable backup at the very least. Don't sleep on wide receiver Tory Horton, either, who was very productive at Colorado State, putting together 71 catches for 1,131 yards and eight touchdowns in his final season.

# WHO'S NO.1?

## BIJAN ROBINSON

**RB | ATLANTA FALCONS**

Saquon Barkley was awesome last year. So awesome that it'll be tough to repeat. It's difficult to stay healthy enough to get 345 carries in an NFL season. That's part of why Barkley had never reached 300 before 2024. Even if he stays healthy again, he'll have a tough time repeating that 5.8 yards per carry. Since 2002 — the 32-team era — only 11 RB seasons had produced 5.5-plus yards per carry on 200-plus attempts. Only Clinton Portis (2002-03) reached both levels in back-to-back seasons. Barkley entered 2024 averaging 4.3 for his career. Robinson ranked just 20th in opportunity share through Week 6 last season. He climbed to third the rest of the way, trailing only Barkley (by 0.9 percentage points) and Jonathan Taylor. He trailed Barkley by just 1.3 total PPR points over that span. Perhaps most importantly, Robinson nearly doubled Barkley in receptions. That specific usage means Robinson doesn't need as much to go his way to deliver fantasy points in 2025.

**— MATT SCHAUF, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR**

## CEEDEE LAMB

**WR | DALLAS COWBOYS**

Last year, I went with CeeDee for my No. 1 overall pick, and I was rewarded with a Dak Prescott injury and a disappointing season from Lamb, who battled a bum shoulder of his own. But a peek under the hood reveals that things weren't so bad. Lamb gutted his way to a WR8 ranking despite missing his QB from Week 9 on. With Prescott, Lamb averaged a more-than-respectable 15.6 fantasy ppg. Dak is running out of chances before Jerry Jones blows the whole thing up, so look for him to force the issue by force-feeding his WR1. Plus, George Pickens' presence should limit the double-teams and open up the field. Which in turn makes Lamb an enticing sleeper at 1-1.

**— ROB DOSTER, ATHLON MANAGING EDITOR**

FROM LEFT: KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES; JIM DEDMON-IMAGN IMAGES

# SAQUON BARKLEY

**RB | PHILADELPHIA EAGLES**

Barkley did more than just restore the value of bell-cow running backs in the NFL; he made the RB1 in fantasy more relevant than it's been the last several years. Before last season, very few running backs were being taken in the first round of fantasy drafts at all, let alone No. 1. This year, you might see five or six backs in Round 1. Bijan Robinson and Jahmyr Gibbs will go high; Derrick Henry and maybe even rookie Ashton Jeanty will be off the board in Round 1. But Barkley remains the clear No. 1 option. And while no player in NFL history has rushed for 2,000 yards twice, Barkley doesn't need another 2,000-yard season to be the best player in fantasy. Of his 15 total touchdowns last season, only two came as a receiver. If the Eagles do more with Barkley in the passing game this season, he'll be unstoppable.

**— CRAIG ELLENPORT, ATHLON SENIOR EDITOR**

There is no such thing as a regression-proof fantasy football player, and Saquon Barkley sure seems like a poor bet to go for 549 rushing yards over expected next year. Derrick Henry joined him as the only players in the Next Gen Stats Era to ever do that, and no other running back since 2018 has even made it to 400 yards over expected. But when you look at the offensive infrastructure, it's hard to conclude that Barkely doesn't still have historic upside. The fact that he's got an elite running quarterback in Jalen Hurts, a dominant offensive line that returns four of five starters from last year and enough passing-game weapons to keep defenses from completely keying on him makes Barkley feel inevitable again in 2025. You'll find plenty of good players at the top of your draft this year, and it's hard to be disappointed with any of the top four or five picks. But last year taught us that nobody has more of a ceiling than Barkley, and ceiling is what wins leagues.

**— RIVERS McCOWN, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR**

There's no clear-cut pick this year, and while you could make a strong case for a handful of others, Barkley feels like the best combination of high floor and high ceiling. He's still only 28 and will once again be running behind arguably the best offensive line in the NFL. He should remain the focal point of the Eagles offense, and the presence of other dynamic weapons like Jalen Hurts, A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith will punish opposing defenses for stacking the box. He's a special talent in an ideal situation, and that's always a recipe for fantasy dominance.

**— LUKE EASTERLING, ATHLON SENIOR EDITOR**

BILL STREICHER-IMAGN IMAGES

# JA'MARR CHASE

## WR | CINCINNATI BENGALS

SAM GREENE/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

Typically, I'm of the mindset to go with a running back as the No. 1 overall pick. But not this year. Ja'Marr Chase is the No. 1 wide receiver in the NFL, and he has the triple crown to prove it. And he didn't eke out this unique achievement either — finishing with 12 more receptions, nearly 200 more yards and four more touchdowns than No. 2 in each category last season. Through four seasons, Chase's 17-game average shakes out to a 108-1,488-13 line. That should play just fine for the No. 1 pick. And then there are the numerous question marks surrounding a Cincinnati defense that was 25th overall in both yards and points allowed per game. It's not hard to envision the Bengals being involved in plenty of high-scoring games in 2025, which also bodes well for Chase's chances of living up to the No. 1 billing. So for this year, I'll advocate for going against the RB grain at 1-1. (Just please stay healthy Ja'Marr; you too, Joe Burrow.)

**— MARK ROSS, ATHLON CONTRIBUTING EDITOR**

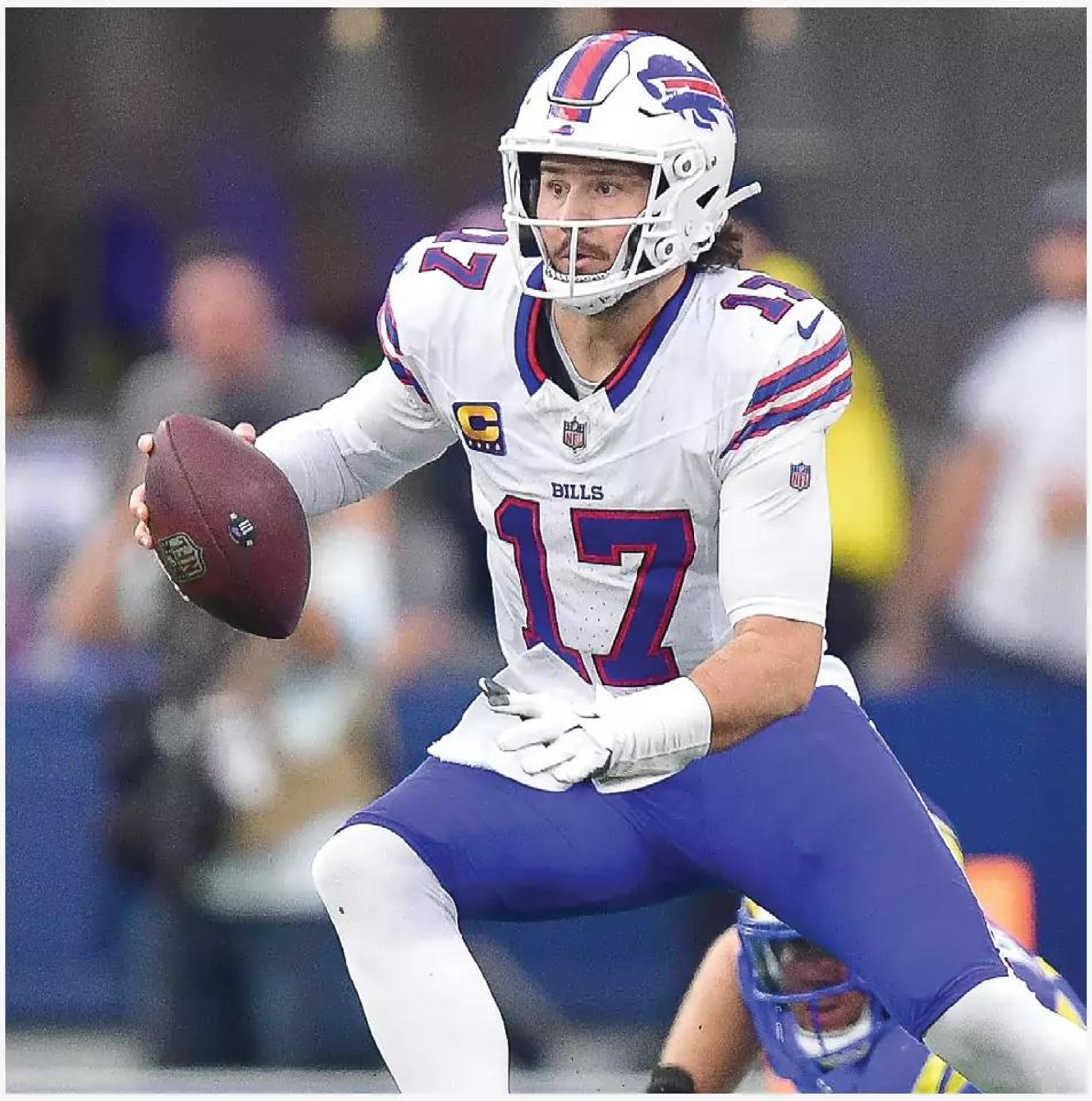
Historically, wide receivers rarely went 1-1, but Chase is a rare wide receiver. He's coming off a conspicuously quiet triple crown season that saw him set career highs in receptions (127), receiving yards (1,708) and receiving touchdowns (17). Chase, who has the most receiving touchdowns (46) in the NFL since entering the league in 2021, has never finished worse than WR13, and he's coming off a WR1 finish. For the first time in a long time, there's no preseason drama in Cincinnati with Joe Burrow, Tee Higgins and Chase all under contract. Count on the 25-year-old special talent to deliver on his premium draft cost.

**— KYLE WOOD, ATHLON SENIOR EDITOR**

# FANTASY POSITION RANKINGS

## QUARTERBACKS

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Josh Allen | BUF |
| ☐ 2 | Jalen Hurts | PHI |
| ☐ 3 | Jayden Daniels | WAS |
| ☐ 4 | Lamar Jackson | BAL |
| ☐ 5 | Patrick Mahomes | KC |
| ☐ 6 | Joe Burrow | CIN |
| ☐ 7 | Justin Fields | NYJ |
| ☐ 8 | Jordan Love | GB |
| ☐ 9 | C.J. Stroud | HOU |
| ☐ 10 | Kyler Murray | ARI |
| ☐ 11 | Drake Maye | NE |
| ☐ 12 | Baker Mayfield | TB |
| ☐ 13 | Dak Prescott | DAL |
| ☐ 14 | Justin Herbert | LAC |
| ☐ 15 | Jared Goff | DET |
| ☐ 16 | Bo Nix | DEN |
| ☐ 17 | Caleb Williams | CHI |
| ☐ 18 | Brock Purdy | SF |
| ☐ 19 | Tua Tagovailoa | MIA |
| ☐ 20 | Trevor Lawrence | JAC |
| ☐ 21 | Matthew Stafford | LAR |
| ☐ 22 | Geno Smith | LV |
| ☐ 23 | Bryce Young | CAR |
| ☐ 24 | J.J. McCarthy | MIN |
| ☐ 25 | Sam Darnold | SEA |
| ☐ 26 | Russell Wilson | NYG |
| ☐ 27 | Michael Penix Jr. | ATL |
| ☐ 28 | Cam Ward | TEN |
| ☐ 29 | Aaron Rodgers | FA |
| ☐ 30 | Tyler Shough | NO |
| ☐ 31 | Anthony Richardson | IND |
| ☐ 32 | Joe Flacco | CLE |
| ☐ 33 | Daniel Jones | IND |
| ☐ 34 | Spencer Rattler | NO |
| ☐ 35 | Kenny Pickett | CLE |
| ☐ 36 | Jaxson Dart | NYG |
| ☐ 37 | Dillon Gabriel | CLE |
| ☐ 38 | Jalen Milroe | SEA |
| ☐ 39 | Will Levis | TEN |
| ☐ 40 | Kirk Cousins | ATL |
| ☐ 41 | Sam Howell | MIN |
| ☐ 42 | Marcus Mariota | WAS |
| ☐ 43 | Tanner McKee | PHI |
| ☐ 44 | Jimmy Garoppolo | LAR |
| ☐ 45 | Zach Wilson | MIA |
| ☐ 46 | Mason Rudolph | PIT |
| ☐ 47 | Joe Milton III | DAL |
| ☐ 48 | Joshua Dobbs | NE |
| ☐ 49 | Gardner Minshew II | KC |
| ☐ 50 | Jameis Winston | NYG |



## RUNNING BACKS

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Bijan Robinson | ATL |
| ☐ 2 | Christian McCaffrey | SF |
| ☐ 3 | Saquon Barkley | PHI |
| ☐ 4 | Ashton Jeanty | LV |
| ☐ 5 | Derrick Henry | BAL |
| ☐ 6 | Jonathan Taylor | IND |
| ☐ 7 | Joe Mixon | HOU |
| ☐ 8 | Jahmyr Gibbs | DET |
| ☐ 9 | De'Von Achane | MIA |
| ☐ 10 | Breece Hall | NYJ |
| ☐ 11 | Kyren Williams | LAR |
| ☐ 12 | Kenneth Walker III | SEA |
| ☐ 13 | James Cook | BUF |
| ☐ 14 | Chuba Hubbard | CAR |
| ☐ 15 | James Conner | ARI |
| ☐ 16 | Josh Jacobs | GB |
| ☐ 17 | Alvin Kamara | NO |
| ☐ 18 | Bucky Irving | TB |
| ☐ 19 | Aaron Jones | MIN |
| ☐ 20 | Chase Brown | CIN |
| ☐ 21 | D'Andre Swift | CHI |
| ☐ 22 | Tony Pollard | TEN |
| ☐ 23 | David Montgomery | DET |
| ☐ 24 | Jaylen Warren | PIT |
| ☐ 25 | Isiah Pacheco | KC |
| ☐ 26 | Quinshon Judkins | CLE |
| ☐ 27 | Tyjae Spears | TEN |
| ☐ 28 | Omarion Hampton | LAC |
| ☐ 29 | RJ Harvey | DEN |
| ☐ 30 | Brian Robinson Jr. | WAS |
| ☐ 31 | TreVeyon Henderson | NE |
| ☐ 32 | Cam Skattebo | NYG |
| ☐ 33 | Kaleb Johnson | PIT |
| ☐ 34 | Tyrone Tracy Jr. | NYG |
| ☐ 35 | Najee Harris | LAC |
| ☐ 36 | Jaydon Blue | DAL |
| ☐ 37 | Tank Bigsby | JAC |
| ☐ 38 | Jordan Mason | MIN |
| ☐ 39 | Austin Ekeler | WAS |
| ☐ 40 | Zach Charbonnet | SEA |
| ☐ 41 | Rachaad White | TB |
| ☐ 42 | Trey Benson | ARI |
| ☐ 43 | Jaleel McLaughlin | DEN |
| ☐ 44 | Jerome Ford | CLE |
| ☐ 45 | Javonte Williams | DAL |
| ☐ 46 | Rhamondre Stevenson | NE |
| ☐ 47 | Roschon Johnson | CHI |
| ☐ 48 | Jaylen Wright | MIA |
| ☐ 49 | J.K. Dobbins | FA |
| ☐ 50 | Trevor Etienne | CAR |
| ☐ 51 | Bhayshul Tuten | JAC |
| ☐ 52 | Kendre Miller | NO |
| ☐ 53 | MarShawn Lloyd | GB |
| ☐ 54 | Ray Davis | BUF |
| ☐ 55 | Travis Etienne Jr. | JAC |
| ☐ 56 | Will Shipley | PHI |
| ☐ 57 | Justice Hill | BAL |
| ☐ 58 | Miles Sanders | DAL |
| ☐ 59 | Blake Corum | LAR |
| ☐ 60 | Tyler Allgeier | ATL |
| ☐ 61 | Zack Moss | CIN |
| ☐ 62 | Sean Tucker | TB |
| ☐ 63 | Elijah Mitchell | KC |
| ☐ 64 | Isaac Guerendo | SF |
| ☐ 65 | Antonio Gibson | NE |
| ☐ 66 | Ty Johnson | BUF |
| ☐ 67 | Dylan Sampson | CLE |
| ☐ 68 | Audric Estime | DEN |
| ☐ 69 | Raheem Mostert | LV |
| ☐ 70 | Braelon Allen | NYJ |
| ☐ 71 | Samaje Perine | CIN |
| ☐ 72 | Woody Marks | HOU |
| ☐ 73 | Isaiah Davis | NYJ |
| ☐ 74 | Kareem Hunt | KC |
| ☐ 75 | Devin Singletary | NYG |
| ☐ 76 | Rico Dowdle | CAR |
| ☐ 77 | Alexander Mattison | MIA |
| ☐ 78 | A.J. Dillon | PHI |
| ☐ 79 | Keaton Mitchell | BAL |
| ☐ 80 | Ollie Gordon II | MIA |

FROM LEFT: GARY A. VASQUEZ-IMAGN IMAGES; BRETT DAVIS-IMAGN IMAGES

# WIDE RECEIVERS

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Ja'Marr Chase | CIN |
| ☐ 2 | Puka Nacua | LAR |
| ☐ 3 | CeeDee Lamb | DAL |
| ☐ 4 | Malik Nabers | NYG |
| ☐ 5 | Justin Jefferson | MIN |
| ☐ 6 | Nico Collins | HOU |
| ☐ 7 | A.J. Brown | PHI |
| ☐ 8 | Drake London | ATL |
| ☐ 9 | Brian Thomas Jr. | JAC |
| ☐ 10 | Tee Higgins | CIN |
| ☐ 11 | Rashee Rice | KC |
| ☐ 12 | Jaxon Smith-Njigba | SEA |
| ☐ 13 | Tyreek Hill | MIA |
| ☐ 14 | Davante Adams | LAR |
| ☐ 15 | Amon-Ra St. Brown | DET |
| ☐ 16 | Mike Evans | TB |
| ☐ 17 | Garrett Wilson | NYJ |
| ☐ 18 | DJ Moore | CHI |
| ☐ 19 | DeVonta Smith | PHI |
| ☐ 20 | Ladd McConkey | LAC |
| ☐ 21 | Jayden Reed | GB |
| ☐ 22 | Chris Olave | NO |
| ☐ 23 | Zay Flowers | BAL |
| ☐ 24 | Terry McLaurin | WAS |
| ☐ 25 | Jaylen Waddle | MIA |
| ☐ 26 | Marvin Harrison Jr. | ARI |
| ☐ 27 | Jakobi Meyers | LV |
| ☐ 28 | Calvin Ridley | TEN |
| ☐ 29 | Josh Downs | IND |
| ☐ 30 | Deebo Samuel | WAS |
| ☐ 31 | DK Metcalf | PIT |
| ☐ 32 | Tetairoa McMillan | CAR |
| ☐ 33 | George Pickens | DAL |
| ☐ 34 | Jordan Addison | MIN |
| ☐ 35 | Jameson Williams | DET |
| ☐ 36 | Xavier Worthy | KC |
| ☐ 37 | Cooper Kupp | SEA |
| ☐ 38 | Courtland Sutton | DEN |
| ☐ 39 | Khalil Shakir | BUF |
| ☐ 40 | Jerry Jeudy | CLE |
| ☐ 41 | Rome Odunze | CHI |
| ☐ 42 | Jauan Jennings | SF |
| ☐ 43 | Chris Godwin | TB |
| ☐ 44 | Michael Pittman Jr. | IND |
| ☐ 45 | Darnell Mooney | ATL |
| ☐ 46 | Rashid Shaheed | NO |
| ☐ 47 | Brandon Aiyuk | SF |
| ☐ 48 | Stefon Diggs | NE |
| ☐ 49 | Christian Kirk | HOU |
| ☐ 50 | Ricky Pearsall | SF |
| ☐ 51 | Hollywood Brown | KC |
| ☐ 52 | Emeka Egbuka | TB |
| ☐ 53 | Matthew Golden | GB |
| ☐ 54 | Travis Hunter | JAC |
| ☐ 55 | Keon Coleman | BUF |
| ☐ 56 | Wan'Dale Robinson | NYG |

CHARLES LECLAIRE-IMAGN IMAGES

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 57 | Jalen Coker | CAR |
| ☐ 58 | Ray-Ray McCloud III | ATL |
| ☐ 59 | Quentin Johnston | LAC |
| ☐ 60 | Allen Lazard | NYJ |
| ☐ 61 | Amari Cooper | FA |
| ☐ 62 | Romeo Doubs | GB |
| ☐ 63 | Michael Wilson | ARI |
| ☐ 64 | Cedric Tillman | CLE |
| ☐ 65 | Tre Harris | LAC |
| ☐ 66 | Dontayvion Wicks | GB |
| ☐ 67 | Parker Washington | JAC |
| ☐ 68 | Tutu Atwell | LAR |
| ☐ 69 | Joshua Palmer | BUF |
| ☐ 70 | Marvin Mims Jr. | DEN |
| ☐ 71 | Darius Slayton | NYG |
| ☐ 72 | Keenan Allen | FA |
| ☐ 73 | Jack Bech | LV |
| ☐ 74 | Diontae Johnson | CLE |
| ☐ 75 | Rashod Bateman | BAL |
| ☐ 76 | Luther Burden III | CHI |
| ☐ 77 | Tyler Lockett | TEN |
| ☐ 78 | Elic Ayomanor | TEN |
| ☐ 79 | Josh Reynolds | NYJ |
| ☐ 80 | Alec Pierce | IND |
| ☐ 81 | Xavier Legette | CAR |
| ☐ 82 | Tim Patrick | DET |
| ☐ 83 | Brandin Cooks | NO |
| ☐ 84 | Pat Bryant | DEN |
| ☐ 85 | KaVontae Turpin | DAL |
| ☐ 86 | Tre Tucker | LV |
| ☐ 87 | Greg Dortch | ARI |
| ☐ 88 | Jayden Higgins | HOU |
| ☐ 89 | Andrei Iosivas | CIN |
| ☐ 90 | Kendrick Bourne | NE |
| ☐ 91 | DeMario Douglas | NE |
| ☐ 92 | Adam Thielen | CAR |
| ☐ 93 | Jalin Hyatt | NYG |
| ☐ 94 | DeAndre Hopkins | BAL |
| ☐ 95 | Troy Franklin | DEN |
| ☐ 96 | Adonai Mitchell | IND |
| ☐ 97 | Roman Wilson | PIT |
| ☐ 98 | Jalen McMillan | TB |
| ☐ 99 | Noah Brown | WAS |
| ☐ 100 | Mar. Valdes-Scantling | SEA |

# TIGHT ENDS

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Trey McBride | ARI |
| ☐ 2 | Brock Bowers | LV |
| ☐ 3 | Sam LaPorta | DET |
| ☐ 4 | David Njoku | CLE |
| ☐ 5 | George Kittle | SF |
| ☐ 6 | Travis Kelce | KC |
| ☐ 7 | T.J. Hockenson | MIN |
| ☐ 8 | Dalton Kincaid | BUF |
| ☐ 9 | Jonnu Smith | MIA |
| ☐ 10 | Mark Andrews | BAL |
| ☐ 11 | Hunter Henry | NE |
| ☐ 12 | Jake Ferguson | DAL |
| ☐ 13 | Evan Engram | DEN |
| ☐ 14 | Pat Freiermuth | PIT |
| ☐ 15 | Kyle Pitts | ATL |
| ☐ 16 | Tyler Warren | IND |
| ☐ 17 | Zach Ertz | WAS |
| ☐ 18 | Tucker Kraft | GB |
| ☐ 19 | Chig Okonkwo | TEN |
| ☐ 20 | Dallas Goedert | PHI |

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 21 | Juwan Johnson | NO |
| ☐ 22 | Dalton Schultz | HOU |
| ☐ 23 | Mike Gesicki | CIN |
| ☐ 24 | Tyler Higbee | LAR |
| ☐ 25 | Ja'Tavion Sanders | CAR |
| ☐ 26 | Isaiah Likely | BAL |
| ☐ 27 | Cade Otton | TB |
| ☐ 28 | Theo Johnson | NYG |
| ☐ 29 | Colston Loveland | CHI |
| ☐ 30 | Will Dissly | LAC |
| ☐ 31 | Michael Mayer | LV |
| ☐ 32 | Noah Gray | KC |
| ☐ 33 | Brenton Strange | JAC |
| ☐ 34 | Mason Taylor | NYJ |
| ☐ 35 | Harold Fannin Jr. | CLE |
| ☐ 36 | Noah Fant | SEA |
| ☐ 37 | Ben Sinnott | WAS |
| ☐ 38 | Elijah Arroyo | SEA |
| ☐ 39 | Luke Musgrave | GB |
| ☐ 40 | Terrance Ferguson | LAR |

# KICKERS

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Brandon Aubrey | DAL |
| ☐ 2 | Jake Bates | DET |
| ☐ 3 | Wil Lutz | DEN |
| ☐ 4 | Cameron Dicker | LAC |
| ☐ 5 | Tyler Loop | BAL |
| ☐ 6 | Younghoe Koo | ATL |
| ☐ 7 | Will Reichard | MIN |
| ☐ 8 | Tyler Bass | BUF |
| ☐ 9 | Matt Gay | WAS |
| ☐ 10 | Harrison Butker | KC |
| ☐ 11 | Chris Boswell | PIT |
| ☐ 12 | Jake Elliott | PHI |
| ☐ 13 | Greg Zuerlein | NYJ |
| ☐ 14 | Daniel Carlson | LV |

| Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ 15 | Joshua Karty | LAR |
| ☐ 16 | Cairo Santos | CHI |
| ☐ 17 | Evan McPherson | CIN |
| ☐ 18 | Jason Sanders | MIA |
| ☐ 19 | Chase McLaughlin | TB |
| ☐ 20 | Ka'imi Fairbairn | HOU |
| ☐ 21 | Blake Grupe | NO |
| ☐ 22 | Graham Gano | NYG |
| ☐ 23 | Jason Myers | SEA |
| ☐ 24 | Brandon McManus | GB |
| ☐ 25 | Jake Moody | SF |
| ☐ 26 | Cam Little | JAC |
| ☐ 27 | Spencer Shrader | IND |
| ☐ 28 | Chad Ryland | ARI |

# DEFENSE/ST

| Rk | Player |
|---|---|
| ☐ 1 | Buffalo |
| ☐ 2 | Baltimore |
| ☐ 3 | Houston |
| ☐ 4 | Dallas |
| ☐ 5 | Green Bay |
| ☐ 6 | New York Jets |
| ☐ 7 | Denver |
| ☐ 8 | Kansas City |
| ☐ 9 | Pittsburgh |
| ☐ 10 | Minnesota |
| ☐ 11 | Cleveland |

| Rk | Player |
|---|---|
| ☐ 12 | Philadelphia |
| ☐ 13 | Detroit |
| ☐ 14 | Seattle |
| ☐ 15 | Indianapolis |
| ☐ 16 | New England |
| ☐ 17 | San Francisco |
| ☐ 18 | L.A. Rams |
| ☐ 19 | New York Giants |
| ☐ 20 | Tampa Bay |
| ☐ 21 | Washington |
| ☐ 22 | Chicago |

| Rk | Player |
|---|---|
| ☐ 23 | Jacksonville |
| ☐ 24 | L.A. Chargers |
| ☐ 25 | Miami |
| ☐ 26 | Carolina |
| ☐ 27 | Las Vegas |
| ☐ 28 | Arizona |
| ☐ 29 | Atlanta |
| ☐ 30 | New Orleans |
| ☐ 31 | Tennessee |
| ☐ 32 | Cincinnati |

# TOP 280

## FANTASY BIG BOARD

FOR MORE FANTASY, VISIT
**ATHLONSPORTS.COM**

BIJAN ROBINSON

JA'MARR CHASE

| | RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Bijan Robinson | RB | ATL |
| ☐ | 2 | Ja'Marr Chase | WR | CIN |
| ☐ | 3 | Puka Nacua | WR | LAR |
| ☐ | 4 | Christian McCaffrey | RB | SF |
| ☐ | 5 | Saquon Barkley | RB | PHI |
| ☐ | 6 | CeeDee Lamb | WR | DAL |
| ☐ | 7 | Malik Nabers | WR | NYG |
| ☐ | 8 | Justin Jefferson | WR | MIN |
| ☐ | 9 | Nico Collins | WR | HOU |
| ☐ | 10 | Ashton Jeanty | RB | LV |
| ☐ | 11 | Derrick Henry | RB | BAL |
| ☐ | 12 | Jonathan Taylor | RB | IND |
| ☐ | 13 | A.J. Brown | WR | PHI |
| ☐ | 14 | Drake London | WR | ATL |
| ☐ | 15 | Brian Thomas Jr. | WR | JAC |
| ☐ | 16 | Trey McBride | TE | ARI |
| ☐ | 17 | Brock Bowers | TE | LV |
| ☐ | 18 | Tee Higgins | WR | CIN |
| ☐ | 19 | Rashee Rice | WR | KC |
| ☐ | 20 | Joe Mixon | RB | HOU |
| ☐ | 21 | Jahmyr Gibbs | RB | DET |
| ☐ | 22 | De'Von Achane | RB | MIA |
| ☐ | 23 | Breece Hall | RB | NYJ |
| ☐ | 24 | Kyren Williams | RB | LAR |
| ☐ | 25 | Jaxon Smith-Njigba | WR | SEA |
| ☐ | 26 | Tyreek Hill | WR | MIA |
| ☐ | 27 | Davante Adams | WR | LAR |
| ☐ | 28 | Amon-Ra St. Brown | WR | DET |
| ☐ | 29 | Mike Evans | WR | TB |
| ☐ | 30 | Garrett Wilson | WR | NYJ |
| ☐ | 31 | Josh Allen | QB | BUF |
| ☐ | 32 | Jalen Hurts | QB | PHI |
| ☐ | 33 | DJ Moore | WR | CHI |
| ☐ | 34 | DeVonta Smith | WR | PHI |
| ☐ | 35 | Ladd McConkey | WR | LAC |
| ☐ | 36 | Kenneth Walker III | RB | SEA |
| ☐ | 37 | James Cook | RB | BUF |
| ☐ | 38 | Jayden Daniels | QB | WAS |
| ☐ | 39 | Lamar Jackson | QB | BAL |
| ☐ | 40 | Jayden Reed | WR | GB |
| ☐ | 41 | Chris Olave | WR | NO |
| ☐ | 42 | Zay Flowers | WR | BAL |
| ☐ | 43 | Terry McLaurin | WR | WAS |
| ☐ | 44 | Jaylen Waddle | WR | MIA |
| ☐ | 45 | Chuba Hubbard | RB | CAR |
| ☐ | 46 | James Conner | RB | ARI |
| ☐ | 47 | Josh Jacobs | RB | GB |
| ☐ | 48 | Alvin Kamara | RB | NO |
| ☐ | 49 | Bucky Irving | RB | TB |
| ☐ | 50 | Marvin Harrison Jr. | WR | ARI |
| ☐ | 51 | Aaron Jones Sr. | RB | MIN |
| ☐ | 52 | Chase Brown | RB | CIN |
| ☐ | 53 | Patrick Mahomes | QB | KC |
| ☐ | 54 | Joe Burrow | QB | CIN |
| ☐ | 55 | Sam LaPorta | TE | DET |
| ☐ | 56 | D'Andre Swift | RB | CHI |
| ☐ | 57 | Tony Pollard | RB | TEN |
| ☐ | 58 | David Montgomery | RB | DET |
| ☐ | 59 | Jakobi Meyers | WR | LV |
| ☐ | 60 | Calvin Ridley | WR | TEN |
| ☐ | 61 | Josh Downs | WR | IND |
| ☐ | 62 | Deebo Samuel | WR | WAS |
| ☐ | 63 | DK Metcalf | WR | PIT |
| ☐ | 64 | Tetairoa McMillan | WR | CAR |
| ☐ | 65 | Jordan Addison | WR | MIN |
| ☐ | 66 | Jameson Williams | WR | DET |
| ☐ | 67 | George Pickens | WR | DAL |
| ☐ | 68 | Xavier Worthy | WR | KC |
| ☐ | 69 | Cooper Kupp | WR | SEA |
| ☐ | 70 | Courtland Sutton | WR | DEN |
| ☐ | 71 | David Njoku | TE | CLE |
| ☐ | 72 | George Kittle | TE | SF |
| ☐ | 73 | Jaylen Warren | RB | PIT |
| ☐ | 74 | Isiah Pacheco | RB | KC |
| ☐ | 75 | Quinshon Judkins | RB | CLE |
| ☐ | 76 | Travis Kelce | TE | KC |
| ☐ | 77 | Tyjae Spears | RB | TEN |
| ☐ | 78 | Omarion Hampton | RB | LAC |
| ☐ | 79 | RJ Harvey | RB | DEN |
| ☐ | 80 | Brian Robinson Jr. | RB | WAS |
| ☐ | 81 | TreVeyon Henderson | RB | NE |
| ☐ | 82 | Khalil Shakir | WR | BUF |
| ☐ | 83 | Jerry Jeudy | WR | CLE |
| ☐ | 84 | Rome Odunze | WR | CHI |
| ☐ | 85 | Jauan Jennings | WR | SF |
| ☐ | 86 | Chris Godwin | WR | TB |
| ☐ | 87 | Michael Pittman Jr. | WR | IND |
| ☐ | 88 | Justin Fields | QB | NYJ |
| ☐ | 89 | Jordan Love | QB | GB |
| ☐ | 90 | C.J. Stroud | QB | HOU |
| ☐ | 91 | Darnell Mooney | WR | ATL |
| ☐ | 92 | Rashid Shaheed | WR | NO |
| ☐ | 93 | Brandon Aiyuk | WR | SF |
| ☐ | 94 | Cam Skattebo | RB | NYG |
| ☐ | 95 | Kaleb Johnson | RB | PIT |
| ☐ | 96 | Tyrone Tracy Jr. | RB | NYG |
| ☐ | 97 | Kyler Murray | QB | ARI |
| ☐ | 98 | Drake Maye | QB | NE |
| ☐ | 99 | Baker Mayfield | QB | TB |
| ☐ | 100 | T.J. Hockenson | TE | MIN |
| ☐ | 101 | Dalton Kincaid | TE | BUF |
| ☐ | 102 | Jonnu Smith | TE | MIA |
| ☐ | 103 | Stefon Diggs | WR | NE |
| ☐ | 104 | Christian Kirk | WR | HOU |
| ☐ | 105 | Ricky Pearsall | WR | SF |
| ☐ | 106 | Hollywood Brown | WR | KC |
| ☐ | 107 | Najee Harris | RB | LAC |
| ☐ | 108 | Mark Andrews | TE | BAL |
| ☐ | 109 | Jaydon Blue | RB | DAL |
| ☐ | 110 | Tank Bigsby | RB | JAC |
| ☐ | 111 | Hunter Henry | TE | NE |
| ☐ | 112 | Jake Ferguson | TE | DAL |
| ☐ | 113 | Emeka Egbuka | WR | TB |
| ☐ | 114 | Matthew Golden | WR | GB |

FROM TOP: AMBER SEARLS-IMAGN IMAGES; SAM GREENE/USA TODAY NETWORK VIA IMAGN IMAGES

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 115 | Travis Hunter | WR | JAC |
| ☐ 116 | Keon Coleman | WR | BUF |
| ☐ 117 | Wan'Dale Robinson | WR | NYG |
| ☐ 118 | Dak Prescott | QB | DAL |
| ☐ 119 | Justin Herbert | QB | LAC |
| ☐ 120 | Jared Goff | QB | DET |
| ☐ 121 | Bo Nix | QB | DEN |
| ☐ 122 | Caleb Williams | QB | CHI |
| ☐ 123 | Brock Purdy | QB | SF |
| ☐ 124 | Jalen Coker | WR | CAR |
| ☐ 125 | Ray-Ray McCloud III | WR | ATL |
| ☐ 126 | Quentin Johnston | WR | LAC |
| ☐ 127 | Evan Engram | TE | DEN |
| ☐ 128 | Pat Freiermuth | TE | PIT |
| ☐ 129 | Jordan Mason | RB | MIN |
| ☐ 130 | Austin Ekeler | RB | WAS |
| ☐ 131 | Zach Charbonnet | RB | SEA |
| ☐ 132 | Rachaad White | RB | TB |
| ☐ 133 | Allen Lazard | WR | NYJ |
| ☐ 134 | Amari Cooper | WR | FA |
| ☐ 135 | Romeo Doubs | WR | GB |
| ☐ 136 | Michael Wilson | WR | ARI |
| ☐ 137 | Cedric Tillman | WR | CLE |
| ☐ 138 | Tre Harris | WR | LAC |
| ☐ 139 | Trey Benson | RB | ARI |
| ☐ 140 | Jaleel McLaughlin | RB | DEN |
| ☐ 141 | Jerome Ford | RB | CLE |
| ☐ 142 | Javonte Williams | RB | DAL |
| ☐ 143 | Rhamondre Stevenson | RB | NE |
| ☐ 144 | Roschon Johnson | RB | CHI |
| ☐ 145 | Jaylen Wright | RB | MIA |
| ☐ 146 | J.K. Dobbins | RB | FA |
| ☐ 147 | Kyle Pitts | TE | ATL |
| ☐ 148 | Tyler Warren | TE | IND |
| ☐ 149 | Dontayvion Wicks | WR | GB |
| ☐ 150 | Trevor Etienne | RB | CAR |
| ☐ 151 | Bhayshul Tuten | RB | JAC |
| ☐ 152 | Kendre Miller | RB | NO |
| ☐ 153 | MarShawn Lloyd | RB | GB |
| ☐ 154 | Ray Davis | RB | BUF |
| ☐ 155 | Travis Etienne Jr. | RB | JAC |
| ☐ 156 | Zach Ertz | TE | WAS |
| ☐ 157 | Tucker Kraft | TE | GB |
| ☐ 158 | Parker Washington | WR | JAC |
| ☐ 159 | Tutu Atwell | WR | LAR |
| ☐ 160 | Joshua Palmer | WR | BUF |
| ☐ 161 | Marvin Mims Jr. | WR | DEN |
| ☐ 162 | Darius Slayton | WR | NYG |
| ☐ 163 | Keenan Allen | WR | FA |
| ☐ 164 | Buffalo | DST | BUF |
| ☐ 165 | Baltimore | DST | BAL |
| ☐ 166 | Houston | DST | HOU |
| ☐ 167 | Tua Tagovailoa | QB | MIA |
| ☐ 168 | Trevor Lawrence | QB | JAC |
| ☐ 169 | Matthew Stafford | QB | LAR |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 170 | Jack Bech | WR | LV |
| ☐ 171 | Diontae Johnson | WR | CLE |
| ☐ 172 | Rashod Bateman | WR | BAL |
| ☐ 173 | Luther Burden III | WR | CHI |
| ☐ 174 | Will Shipley | RB | PHI |
| ☐ 175 | Justice Hill | RB | BAL |
| ☐ 176 | Miles Sanders | RB | DAL |
| ☐ 177 | Blake Corum | RB | LAR |
| ☐ 178 | Tyler Allgeier | RB | ATL |
| ☐ 179 | Tyler Lockett | WR | TEN |
| ☐ 180 | Elic Ayomanor | WR | TEN |
| ☐ 181 | Geno Smith | QB | LV |
| ☐ 182 | Bryce Young | QB | CAR |
| ☐ 183 | J.J. McCarthy | QB | MIN |
| ☐ 184 | Sam Darnold | QB | SEA |
| ☐ 185 | Dallas | DST | DAL |
| ☐ 186 | Green Bay | DST | GB |
| ☐ 187 | New York Jets | DST | NYJ |
| ☐ 188 | Denver | DST | DEN |
| ☐ 189 | Zack Moss | RB | CIN |
| ☐ 190 | Sean Tucker | RB | TB |
| ☐ 191 | Elijah Mitchell | RB | KC |
| ☐ 192 | Isaac Guerendo | RB | SF |
| ☐ 193 | Josh Reynolds | WR | NYJ |
| ☐ 194 | Alec Pierce | WR | IND |
| ☐ 195 | Xavier Legette | WR | CAR |
| ☐ 196 | Antonio Gibson | RB | NE |
| ☐ 197 | Ty Johnson | RB | BUF |
| ☐ 198 | Dylan Sampson | RB | CLE |
| ☐ 199 | Chig Okonkwo | TE | TEN |
| ☐ 200 | Dallas Goedert | TE | PHI |
| ☐ 201 | Audric Estime | RB | DEN |
| ☐ 202 | Raheem Mostert | RB | LV |
| ☐ 203 | Braelon Allen | RB | NYJ |
| ☐ 204 | Tim Patrick | WR | DET |
| ☐ 205 | Brandin Cooks | WR | NO |
| ☐ 206 | Pat Bryant | WR | DEN |
| ☐ 207 | Samaje Perine | RB | CIN |
| ☐ 208 | Woody Marks | RB | HOU |
| ☐ 209 | Isaiah Davis | RB | NYJ |
| ☐ 210 | Kareem Hunt | RB | KC |
| ☐ 211 | Devin Singletary | RB | NYG |
| ☐ 212 | Juwan Johnson | TE | NO |
| ☐ 213 | Dalton Schultz | TE | HOU |
| ☐ 214 | Mike Gesicki | TE | CIN |
| ☐ 215 | Rico Dowdle | RB | CAR |
| ☐ 216 | Alexander Mattison | RB | MIA |
| ☐ 217 | A.J. Dillon | RB | PHI |
| ☐ 218 | Keaton Mitchell | RB | BAL |
| ☐ 219 | Russell Wilson | QB | NYG |
| ☐ 220 | Michael Penix Jr. | QB | ATL |
| ☐ 221 | Cam Ward | QB | TEN |
| ☐ 222 | Aaron Rodgers | QB | FA |
| ☐ 223 | Tyler Higbee | TE | LAR |
| ☐ 224 | Ja'Tavion Sanders | TE | CAR |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 225 | Isaiah Likely | TE | BAL |
| ☐ 226 | Kansas City | DST | KC |
| ☐ 227 | Pittsburgh | DST | PIT |
| ☐ 228 | Minnesota | DST | MIN |
| ☐ 229 | Cleveland | DST | CLE |
| ☐ 230 | Philadelphia | DST | PHI |
| ☐ 231 | Brandon Aubrey | K | DAL |
| ☐ 232 | Jake Bates | K | DET |
| ☐ 233 | Wil Lutz | K | DEN |
| ☐ 234 | Cameron Dicker | K | LAC |
| ☐ 235 | Tyler Loop | K | BAL |
| ☐ 236 | Younghoe Koo | K | ATL |
| ☐ 237 | Will Reichard | K | MIN |
| ☐ 238 | Tyler Bass | K | BUF |
| ☐ 239 | Matt Gay | K | WAS |
| ☐ 240 | Harrison Butker | K | KC |
| ☐ 241 | Chris Boswell | K | PIT |
| ☐ 242 | Jake Elliott | K | PHI |
| ☐ 243 | KaVontae Turpin | WR | DAL |
| ☐ 244 | Tre Tucker | WR | LV |
| ☐ 245 | Greg Dortch | WR | ARI |
| ☐ 246 | Jayden Higgins | WR | HOU |
| ☐ 247 | Andrei Iosivas | WR | CIN |
| ☐ 248 | Kendrick Bourne | WR | NE |
| ☐ 249 | DeMario Douglas | WR | NE |
| ☐ 250 | Adam Thielen | WR | CAR |
| ☐ 251 | Ollie Gordon II | RB | MIA |
| ☐ 252 | DJ Giddens | RB | IND |
| ☐ 253 | Kenneth Gainwell | RB | PIT |
| ☐ 254 | Phil Mafah | RB | DAL |
| ☐ 255 | Emanuel Wilson | RB | GB |
| ☐ 256 | Brashard Smith | RB | KC |
| ☐ 257 | Jalin Hyatt | WR | NYG |
| ☐ 258 | DeAndre Hopkins | WR | BAL |
| ☐ 259 | Troy Franklin | WR | DEN |
| ☐ 260 | Adonai Mitchell | WR | IND |
| ☐ 261 | Roman Wilson | WR | PIT |
| ☐ 262 | Kyle Monangai | RB | CHI |
| ☐ 263 | Jarquez Hunter | RB | LAR |
| ☐ 264 | Khalil Herbert | RB | IND |
| ☐ 265 | Devin Neal | RB | NO |
| ☐ 266 | Jalen McMillan | WR | TB |
| ☐ 267 | Cade Otton | TE | TB |
| ☐ 268 | Theo Johnson | TE | NYG |
| ☐ 269 | Colston Loveland | TE | CHI |
| ☐ 270 | Noah Brown | WR | WAS |
| ☐ 271 | Mar. Valdes-Scantling | WR | SEA |
| ☐ 272 | Jordan James | RB | SF |
| ☐ 273 | Tyler Shough | QB | NO |
| ☐ 274 | Anthony Richardson | QB | IND |
| ☐ 275 | Joe Flacco | QB | CLE |
| ☐ 276 | Daniel Jones | QB | IND |
| ☐ 277 | Will Dissly | TE | LAC |
| ☐ 278 | Michael Mayer | TE | LV |
| ☐ 279 | Noah Gray | TE | KC |
| ☐ 280 | Brenton Strange | TE | JAC |

# TOP 240

## FANTASY WITH IDPs

FOR MORE FANTASY, VISIT
**ATHLONSPORTS.COM**

ZAIRE FRANKLIN

| | RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Bijan Robinson | RB | ATL |
| ☐ | 2 | Ja'Marr Chase | WR | CIN |
| ☐ | 3 | Puka Nacua | WR | LAR |
| ☐ | 4 | Christian McCaffrey | RB | SF |
| ☐ | 5 | Saquon Barkley | RB | PHI |
| ☐ | 6 | CeeDee Lamb | WR | DAL |
| ☐ | 7 | Malik Nabers | WR | NYG |
| ☐ | 8 | Justin Jefferson | WR | MIN |
| ☐ | 9 | Nico Collins | WR | HOU |
| ☐ | 10 | Ashton Jeanty | RB | LV |
| ☐ | 11 | Derrick Henry | RB | BAL |
| ☐ | 12 | Jonathan Taylor | RB | IND |
| ☐ | 13 | A.J. Brown | WR | PHI |
| ☐ | 14 | Drake London | WR | ATL |
| ☐ | 15 | Brian Thomas Jr. | WR | JAC |
| ☐ | 16 | Trey McBride | TE | ARI |
| ☐ | 17 | Brock Bowers | TE | LV |
| ☐ | 18 | Tee Higgins | WR | CIN |
| ☐ | 19 | Rashee Rice | WR | KC |
| ☐ | 20 | Joe Mixon | RB | HOU |
| ☐ | 21 | Jahmyr Gibbs | RB | DET |
| ☐ | 22 | De'Von Achane | RB | MIA |
| ☐ | 23 | Breece Hall | RB | NYJ |
| ☐ | 24 | Kyren Williams | RB | LAR |
| ☐ | 25 | Jaxon Smith-Njigba | WR | SEA |
| ☐ | 26 | Tyreek Hill | WR | MIA |
| ☐ | 27 | Davante Adams | WR | LAR |
| ☐ | 28 | Amon-Ra St. Brown | WR | DET |
| ☐ | 29 | Mike Evans | WR | TB |
| ☐ | 30 | Garrett Wilson | WR | NYJ |
| ☐ | 31 | Josh Allen | QB | BUF |
| ☐ | 32 | Jalen Hurts | QB | PHI |
| ☐ | 33 | DJ Moore | WR | CHI |
| ☐ | 34 | DeVonta Smith | WR | PHI |
| ☐ | 35 | Ladd McConkey | WR | LAC |
| ☐ | 36 | Kenneth Walker III | RB | SEA |
| ☐ | 37 | James Cook | RB | BUF |
| ☐ | 38 | Jayden Daniels | QB | WAS |
| ☐ | 39 | Lamar Jackson | QB | BAL |
| ☐ | 40 | Jayden Reed | WR | GB |
| ☐ | 41 | Chris Olave | WR | DEN |
| ☐ | 42 | Zay Flowers | WR | BAL |
| ☐ | 43 | Terry McLaurin | WR | WAS |
| ☐ | 44 | Jaylen Waddle | WR | MIA |
| ☐ | 45 | Chuba Hubbard | RB | CAR |
| ☐ | 46 | James Conner | RB | ARI |
| ☐ | 47 | Josh Jacobs | RB | GB |
| ☐ | 48 | Alvin Kamara | RB | NO |
| ☐ | 49 | Bucky Irving | RB | TB |
| ☐ | 50 | Marvin Harrison Jr. | WR | ARI |
| ☐ | 51 | Aaron Jones Sr. | RB | MIN |
| ☐ | 52 | Chase Brown | RB | CIN |
| ☐ | 53 | Patrick Mahomes | QB | KC |
| ☐ | 54 | Joe Burrow | QB | CIN |
| ☐ | 55 | Sam LaPorta | TE | DET |
| ☐ | 56 | D'Andre Swift | RB | CHI |
| ☐ | 57 | Tony Pollard | RB | TEN |
| ☐ | 58 | David Montgomery | RB | DET |
| ☐ | 59 | Jakobi Meyers | WR | LV |
| ☐ | 60 | Calvin Ridley | WR | TEN |
| ☐ | 61 | Josh Downs | WR | IND |
| ☐ | 62 | Deebo Samuel | WR | WAS |
| ☐ | 63 | DK Metcalf | WR | PIT |
| ☐ | 64 | Tetairoa McMillan | WR | CAR |
| ☐ | 65 | Jordan Addison | WR | MIN |
| ☐ | 66 | Jameson Williams | WR | DET |
| ☐ | 67 | George Pickens | WR | DAL |
| ☐ | 68 | Xavier Worthy | WR | KC |
| ☐ | 69 | Zaire Franklin | LB | IND |
| ☐ | 70 | Roquan Smith | LB | BAL |
| ☐ | 71 | Zack Baun | LB | PHI |
| ☐ | 72 | Cooper Kupp | WR | SEA |
| ☐ | 73 | Courtland Sutton | WR | DEN |
| ☐ | 74 | David Njoku | TE | CLE |
| ☐ | 75 | George Kittle | TE | SF |
| ☐ | 76 | Jaylen Warren | RB | PIT |
| ☐ | 77 | Isiah Pacheco | RB | KC |
| ☐ | 78 | Quinshon Judkins | RB | CLE |
| ☐ | 79 | Micah Parsons | DE | DAL |
| ☐ | 80 | Aidan Hutchinson | DE | DET |
| ☐ | 81 | Will Anderson Jr. | DE | HOU |
| ☐ | 82 | Maxx Crosby | DE | LV |
| ☐ | 83 | Myles Garrett | DE | CLE |
| ☐ | 84 | Daiyan Henley | LB | LAC |
| ☐ | 85 | Fred Warner | LB | SF |
| ☐ | 86 | Travis Kelce | TE | KC |
| ☐ | 87 | Tyjae Spears | RB | TEN |
| ☐ | 88 | Omarion Hampton | RB | LAC |
| ☐ | 89 | RJ Harvey | RB | DEN |
| ☐ | 90 | Brian Robinson Jr. | RB | WAS |
| ☐ | 91 | TreVeyon Henderson | RB | NE |
| ☐ | 92 | Brian Branch | S | DET |
| ☐ | 93 | Nick Bosa | DE | SF |
| ☐ | 94 | Robert Spillane | LB | NE |
| ☐ | 95 | Jordyn Brooks | LB | MIA |
| ☐ | 96 | Edgerrin Cooper | LB | GB |

## TOP 65 IDPs

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Zaire Franklin | LB | IND |
| 2 | Roquan Smith | LB | BAL |
| 3 | Zack Baun | LB | PHI |
| 4 | Micah Parsons | DE | DAL |
| 5 | Aidan Hutchinson | DE | DET |
| 6 | Will Anderson Jr. | DE | HOU |
| 7 | Maxx Crosby | DE | LV |
| 8 | Myles Garrett | DE | CLE |
| 9 | Daiyan Henley | LB | LAC |
| 10 | Fred Warner | LB | SF |
| 11 | Brian Branch | S | DET |
| 12 | Nick Bosa | DE | SF |
| 13 | Robert Spillane | LB | NE |
| 14 | Jordyn Brooks | LB | MIA |
| 15 | Edgerrin Cooper | LB | GB |
| 16 | Logan Wilson | LB | CIN |
| 17 | Budda Baker | S | ARI |
| 18 | Antoine Winfield Jr. | S | TB |
| 19 | Trey Hendrickson | DE | CIN |
| 20 | Jared Verse | DE | LAR |
| 21 | Jonathan Greenard | DE | MIN |
| 22 | Kaden Elliss | LB | ATL |
| 23 | Bobby Wagner | LB | WAS |
| 24 | T.J. Edwards | LB | CHI |
| 25 | Kyle Hamilton | S | BAL |
| 26 | Ernest Jones IV | LB | SEA |
| 27 | Terrel Bernard | LB | BUF |
| 28 | Jamien Sherwood | LB | NYJ |
| 29 | Patrick Queen | LB | PIT |
| 30 | Derrick Brown | DT | CAR |
| 31 | DeForest Buckner | DT | IND |
| 32 | Greg Rousseau | DE | BUF |
| 33 | Dexter Lawrence II | DT | NYG |
| 34 | Nick Cross | S | IND |

VINCENT CARCHIETTA-IMAGN IMAGES

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 97 | Logan Wilson | LB | CIN |
| ☐ 98 | Khalil Shakir | WR | BUF |
| ☐ 99 | Jerry Jeudy | WR | CLE |
| ☐ 100 | Rome Odunze | WR | CHI |
| ☐ 101 | Jauan Jennings | WR | SF |
| ☐ 102 | Chris Godwin | WR | TB |
| ☐ 103 | Michael Pittman Jr. | WR | IND |
| ☐ 104 | Justin Fields | QB | NYJ |
| ☐ 105 | Jordan Love | QB | GB |
| ☐ 106 | C.J. Stroud | QB | HOU |
| ☐ 107 | Darnell Mooney | WR | ATL |
| ☐ 108 | Rashid Shaheed | WR | NO |
| ☐ 109 | Brandon Aiyuk | WR | SF |
| ☐ 110 | Cam Skattebo | RB | NYG |
| ☐ 111 | Kaleb Johnson | RB | PIT |
| ☐ 112 | Tyrone Tracy Jr. | RB | NYG |
| ☐ 113 | Kyler Murray | QB | ARI |
| ☐ 114 | Drake Maye | QB | NE |
| ☐ 115 | Baker Mayfield | QB | TB |
| ☐ 116 | T.J. Hockenson | TE | MIN |
| ☐ 117 | Dalton Kincaid | TE | BUF |
| ☐ 118 | Jonnu Smith | TE | MIA |
| ☐ 119 | Budda Baker | S | ARI |
| ☐ 120 | Antoine Winfield Jr. | S | TB |
| ☐ 121 | Trey Hendrickson | DE | CIN |
| ☐ 122 | Jared Verse | DE | LAR |
| ☐ 123 | Jonathan Greenard | DE | MIN |
| ☐ 124 | Kaden Elliss | LB | ATL |
| ☐ 125 | Bobby Wagner | LB | WAS |
| ☐ 126 | T.J. Edwards | LB | CHI |
| ☐ 127 | Stefon Diggs | WR | NE |
| ☐ 128 | Christian Kirk | WR | HOU |
| ☐ 129 | Ricky Pearsall | WR | SF |
| ☐ 130 | Hollywood Brown | WR | KC |
| ☐ 131 | Najee Harris | RB | LAC |
| ☐ 132 | Mark Andrews | TE | BAL |
| ☐ 133 | Jaydon Blue | RB | DAL |
| ☐ 134 | Tank Bigsby | RB | JAC |
| ☐ 135 | Hunter Henry | TE | NE |
| ☐ 136 | Jake Ferguson | TE | DAL |
| ☐ 137 | Emeka Egbuka | WR | TB |
| ☐ 138 | Matthew Golden | WR | GB |
| ☐ 139 | Travis Hunter | WR | JAC |
| ☐ 140 | Keon Coleman | WR | BUF |
| ☐ 141 | Wan'Dale Robinson | WR | NYG |
| ☐ 142 | Dak Prescott | QB | DAL |
| ☐ 143 | Justin Herbert | QB | LAC |
| ☐ 144 | Jared Goff | QB | DET |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 145 | Bo Nix | QB | DEN |
| ☐ 146 | Caleb Williams | QB | CHI |
| ☐ 147 | Brock Purdy | QB | SF |
| ☐ 148 | Kyle Hamilton | S | BAL |
| ☐ 149 | Ernest Jones IV | LB | SEA |
| ☐ 150 | Terrel Bernard | LB | BUF |
| ☐ 151 | Jamien Sherwood | LB | NYJ |
| ☐ 152 | Patrick Queen | LB | PIT |
| ☐ 153 | Jalen Coker | WR | CAR |
| ☐ 154 | Ray-Ray McCloud III | WR | ATL |
| ☐ 155 | Quentin Johnston | WR | LAC |
| ☐ 156 | Evan Engram | TE | DEN |
| ☐ 157 | Pat Freiermuth | TE | PIT |
| ☐ 158 | Jordan Mason | RB | MIN |
| ☐ 159 | Austin Ekeler | RB | WAS |
| ☐ 160 | Zach Charbonnet | RB | SEA |
| ☐ 161 | Rachaad White | RB | TB |
| ☐ 162 | Derrick Brown | DT | CAR |
| ☐ 163 | DeForest Buckner | DT | IND |
| ☐ 164 | Greg Rousseau | DE | BUF |
| ☐ 165 | Dexter Lawrence II | DT | NYG |
| ☐ 166 | Allen Lazard | WR | NYJ |
| ☐ 167 | Amari Cooper | WR | FA |
| ☐ 168 | Romeo Doubs | WR | GB |
| ☐ 169 | Michael Wilson | WR | ARI |
| ☐ 170 | Cedric Tillman | WR | CLE |
| ☐ 171 | Tre Harris | WR | LAC |
| ☐ 172 | Trey Benson | RB | ARI |
| ☐ 173 | Nick Cross | S | IND |
| ☐ 174 | Derwin James Jr. | S | LAC |
| ☐ 175 | Jaleel McLaughlin | RB | DEN |
| ☐ 176 | Jerome Ford | RB | CLE |
| ☐ 177 | Javonte Williams | RB | DAL |
| ☐ 178 | Rhamondre Stevenson | RB | NE |
| ☐ 179 | Jeffery Simmons | DT | TEN |
| ☐ 180 | Danielle Hunter | DE | HOU |
| ☐ 181 | Josh Hines-Allen | DE | JAC |
| ☐ 182 | Lavonte David | LB | TB |
| ☐ 183 | Roschon Johnson | RB | CHI |
| ☐ 184 | Jaylen Wright | RB | MIA |
| ☐ 185 | J.K. Dobbins | RB | FA |
| ☐ 186 | Kyle Pitts | TE | ATL |
| ☐ 187 | Tyler Warren | TE | IND |
| ☐ 188 | Josey Jewell | LB | CAR |
| ☐ 189 | Blake Cashman | LB | MIN |
| ☐ 190 | Azeez Al-Shaair | LB | HOU |
| ☐ 191 | Frankie Luvu | LB | WAS |
| ☐ 192 | Dontayvion Wicks | WR | GB |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ 193 | Trevor Etienne | RB | CAR |
| ☐ 194 | Bhayshul Tuten | RB | JAC |
| ☐ 195 | Kendre Miller | RB | NO |
| ☐ 196 | MarShawn Lloyd | RB | GB |
| ☐ 197 | Ray Davis | RB | BUF |
| ☐ 198 | Travis Etienne Jr. | RB | JAC |
| ☐ 199 | Zach Ertz | TE | WAS |
| ☐ 200 | Tucker Kraft | TE | GB |
| ☐ 201 | Parker Washington | WR | JAC |
| ☐ 202 | Tutu Atwell | WR | LAR |
| ☐ 203 | Joshua Palmer | WR | BUF |
| ☐ 204 | Marvin Mims Jr. | WR | DEN |
| ☐ 205 | Darius Slayton | WR | NYG |
| ☐ 206 | Keenan Allen | WR | FA |
| ☐ 207 | Montez Sweat | DE | CHI |
| ☐ 208 | Travon Walker | DE | JAC |
| ☐ 209 | T.J. Watt | LB | PIT |
| ☐ 210 | Andrew Van Ginkel | LB | MIN |
| ☐ 211 | Josh Sweat | LB | ARI |
| ☐ 212 | Abdul Carter | DE | NYG |
| ☐ 213 | Tua Tagovailoa | QB | MIA |
| ☐ 214 | Trevor Lawrence | QB | JAC |
| ☐ 215 | Matthew Stafford | QB | LAR |
| ☐ 216 | Tyler Nubin | S | NYG |
| ☐ 217 | Grant Delpit | S | CLE |
| ☐ 218 | Brandon Jones | S | DEN |
| ☐ 219 | Jeremy Chinn | S | LV |
| ☐ 220 | Julian Love | S | SEA |
| ☐ 221 | Cody Barton | LB | TEN |
| ☐ 222 | Nick Bolton | LB | KC |
| ☐ 223 | Foyesade Oluokun | LB | JAC |
| ☐ 224 | Jack Campbell | LB | DET |
| ☐ 225 | Germaine Pratt | LB | CIN |
| ☐ 226 | Bobby Okereke | LB | NYG |
| ☐ 227 | Carson Schwesinger | LB | CLE |
| ☐ 228 | Kevin Byard III | S | CHI |
| ☐ 229 | Brandon Aubrey | K | DAL |
| ☐ 230 | Jake Bates | K | DET |
| ☐ 231 | Wil Lutz | K | DEN |
| ☐ 232 | Cameron Dicker | K | LAC |
| ☐ 233 | Tyler Loop | K | BAL |
| ☐ 234 | Younghoe Koo | K | ATL |
| ☐ 235 | Will Reichard | K | MIN |
| ☐ 236 | Tyler Bass | K | BUF |
| ☐ 237 | Matt Gay | K | WAS |
| ☐ 238 | Harrison Butker | K | KC |
| ☐ 239 | Chris Boswell | K | PIT |
| ☐ 240 | Jake Elliott | K | PHI |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | Derwin James Jr. | S | LAC |
| 36 | Jeffery Simmons | DT | TEN |
| 37 | Danielle Hunter | DE | HOU |
| 38 | Josh Hines-Allen | DE | JAC |
| 39 | Lavonte David | LB | TB |
| 40 | Josey Jewell | LB | CAR |
| 41 | Blake Cashman | LB | MIN |
| 42 | Azeez Al-Shaair | LB | HOU |
| 43 | Frankie Luvu | LB | WAS |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| 44 | Montez Sweat | DE | CHI |
| 45 | Travon Walker | DE | JAC |
| 46 | T.J. Watt | LB | PIT |
| 47 | Andrew Van Ginkel | LB | MIN |
| 48 | Josh Sweat | LB | ARI |
| 49 | Abdul Carter | DE | NYG |
| 50 | Tyler Nubin | S | NYG |
| 51 | Grant Delpit | S | CLE |
| 52 | Brandon Jones | S | DEN |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53 | Jeremy Chinn | S | LV |
| 54 | Julian Love | S | SEA |
| 55 | Cody Barton | LB | TEN |
| 56 | Nick Bolton | LB | KC |
| 57 | Foyesade Oluokun | LB | JAC |
| 58 | Jack Campbell | LB | DET |
| 59 | Germaine Pratt | LB | CIN |
| 60 | Bobby Okereke | LB | NYG |
| 61 | Carson Schwesinger | LB | CLE |

| RK | PLAYER | POS | TEAM |
|---|---|---|---|
| 62 | Kevin Byard III | S | CHI |
| 63 | Zach Sieler | DL | MIA |
| 64 | Kobie Turner | DT | LAR |
| 65 | Christian Wilkins | DT | LV |

# QB RANKINGS

|  | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Josh Allen | BUF |
| ☐ | 2 | Jalen Hurts | PHI |
| ☐ | 3 | Jayden Daniels | WAS |
| ☐ | 4 | Lamar Jackson | BAL |
| ☐ | 5 | Patrick Mahomes | KC |
| ☐ | 6 | Joe Burrow | CIN |
| ☐ | 7 | Justin Fields | NYJ |
| ☐ | 8 | Jordan Love | GB |
| ☐ | 9 | C.J. Stroud | HOU |
| ☐ | 10 | Kyler Murray | ARI |
| ☐ | 11 | Drake Maye | NE |
| ☐ | 12 | Baker Mayfield | TB |
| ☐ | 13 | Dak Prescott | DAL |
| ☐ | 14 | Justin Herbert | LAC |
| ☐ | 15 | Jared Goff | DET |
| ☐ | 16 | Bo Nix | DEN |
| ☐ | 17 | Caleb Williams | CHI |
| ☐ | 18 | Brock Purdy | SF |
| ☐ | 19 | Tua Tagovailoa | MIA |
| ☐ | 20 | Trevor Lawrence | JAC |
| ☐ | 21 | Matthew Stafford | LAR |
| ☐ | 22 | Geno Smith | LV |
| ☐ | 23 | Bryce Young | CAR |
| ☐ | 24 | J.J. McCarthy | MIN |
| ☐ | 25 | Sam Darnold | SEA |
| ☐ | 26 | Russell Wilson | NYG |
| ☐ | 27 | Michael Penix | ATL |
| ☐ | 28 | Cam Ward | TEN |
| ☐ | 29 | Aaron Rodgers | FA |
| ☐ | 30 | Tyler Shough | NO |
| ☐ | 31 | Anthony Richardson | IND |
| ☐ | 32 | Joe Flacco | CLE |
| ☐ | 33 | Daniel Jones | IND |
| ☐ | 34 | Spencer Rattler | NO |
| ☐ | 35 | Kenny Pickett | CLE |
| ☐ | 36 | Jaxson Dart | NYG |
| ☐ | 37 | Dillon Gabriel | CLE |
| ☐ | 38 | Jalen Milroe | SEA |
| ☐ | 39 | Will Levis | TEN |
| ☐ | 40 | Kirk Cousins | ATL |
| ☐ | 41 | Sam Howell | MIN |
| ☐ | 42 | Marcus Mariota | WAS |
| ☐ | 43 | Tanner McKee | PHI |
| ☐ | 44 | Jimmy Garoppolo | LAR |
| ☐ | 45 | Zach Wilson | MIA |
| ☐ | 46 | Mason Rudolph | PIT |
| ☐ | 47 | Joe Milton III | DAL |
| ☐ | 48 | Joshua Dobbs | NE |
| ☐ | 49 | Gardner Minshew II | KC |
| ☐ | 50 | Jameis Winston | NYG |

## AVERAGE DEPTH OF THROW

ADOT tracks the distance downfield each pass travels before it is complete, incomplete or intercepted. Quarterbacks with high ADOT marks generally take more chances, which will lead to more coveted big plays. Shown here are the top 40 ADOT marks among QBs who dropped back to pass at least 100 times during the 2024 season.

| PLAYER | TEAM | DB | ADOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anthony Richardson | IND | 299 | 12.3 |
| Michael Penix Jr. | ATL | 114 | 10.6 |
| Trevor Lawrence | JAC | 317 | 9.9 |
| Jameis Winston | CLE | 329 | 9.7 |
| Lamar Jackson | BAL | 597 | 9.3 |
| Sam Darnold | MIN | 672 | 9.3 |
| Joe Flacco | IND | 270 | 9.2 |
| Jordan Love | GB | 492 | 9.2 |
| Justin Herbert | LAC | 618 | 9.2 |
| Will Levis | TEN | 362 | 9.1 |
| Bryce Young | CAR | 450 | 9.0 |
| Brock Purdy | SF | 537 | 9.0 |
| C.J. Stroud | HOU | 703 | 8.8 |
| Josh Allen | BUF | 634 | 8.7 |
| Derek Carr | NO | 300 | 8.6 |
| Russell Wilson | PIT | 426 | 8.4 |
| Aidan O'Connell | LV | 256 | 8.3 |
| Dak Prescott | DAL | 317 | 8.3 |
| Matthew Stafford | LAR | 628 | 8.3 |
| Tyler Huntley | MIA | 168 | 8.2 |
| Spencer Rattler | NO | 264 | 8.2 |
| Jalen Hurts | PHI | 556 | 8.1 |
| Caleb Williams | CHI | 682 | 8.1 |
| Kirk Cousins | ATL | 485 | 8.0 |
| Desmond Ridder | LV | 102 | 7.9 |
| Bo Nix | DEN | 674 | 7.9 |
| Justin Fields | PIT | 197 | 7.8 |
| Mac Jones | JAC | 290 | 7.7 |
| Jayden Daniels | WAS | 736 | 7.7 |
| Joe Burrow | CIN | 725 | 7.7 |
| Mason Rudolph | TEN | 256 | 7.6 |
| Geno Smith | SEA | 652 | 7.6 |
| Cooper Rush | DAL | 326 | 7.5 |
| Daniel Jones | NYG | 389 | 7.5 |
| Drake Maye | NE | 422 | 7.4 |
| Kyler Murray | ARI | 614 | 7.4 |
| Baker Mayfield | TB | 680 | 7.4 |
| Jacoby Brissett | NE | 188 | 7.3 |
| Drew Lock | NYG | 204 | 7.3 |
| Aaron Rodgers | NYJ | 643 | 7.3 |

## INJURY CONCERNS

**TREVOR LAWRENCE, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS**
After missing only one start in his first three seasons, Lawrence missed seven games in 2024 with a shoulder injury and a concussion. The December concussion had one long-term benefit: Lawrence was put on IR, and so he had shoulder surgery before the end of the season. He is expected to be at full strength when the '25 season begins.

**JORDAN LOVE, GREEN BAY PACKERS** Love suffered an MCL sprain in the season-opening loss to the Philadelphia Eagles in Brazil. It was impressive that he missed only two games, coming back strong in Week 4. He started every game after that, though he did miss time in two other games with groin and elbow injuries.

**PATRICK MAHOMES, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** Mahomes didn't miss any playing time due to injury last year, but it was the second season in a row in which he suffered an ankle injury in the postseason that gave Chiefs fans a scare. The ankle might not have been 100% in Super Bowl LIX. It's not a major concern going into the season, but it's something to keep an eye on.

**J.J. McCARTHY, MINNESOTA VIKINGS** After a knee injury ended McCarthy's rookie season before it even started, we really don't know how durable he can be. Vikings head coach Kevin O'Connell is confident enough to hand him the starting job, but McCarthy was a run-first quarterback at Michigan, so he'll always be in danger of taking hard hits.

**DAK PRESCOTT, DALLAS COWBOYS** Coming off a season in which he missed nine games with a bad hamstring injury, Prescott could return to form given that he has a history of coming back strong from injuries. The bad news is that he's had several of them — missing nine or more games in two of the last five seasons.

**ANTHONY RICHARDSON/DANIEL JONES, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** The Colts signed Jones to compete for the starting job with Richardson, who was the team's first-round pick in 2023. Problem is, both of these mobile quarterbacks have a penchant for getting injured. Richardson has missed 19 games in his two NFL seasons. Jones has started as many as 16 games in only one of his six seasons, averaging eight games in each of his last two.

**MATTHEW STAFFORD, LOS ANGELES RAMS** At 37, it's fair to think that Stafford is susceptible to missing time. He started 16 games last season and has missed only three games in the last two seasons, but he played through ankle and rib injuries at various points last year. More importantly, there was time after the 2022 season that some thought Stafford might retire due to shoulder issues. He clearly proved the shoulder was okay, but for how long?

**TUA TAGOVAILOA, MIAMI DOLPHINS** Tagovailoa was healthy when the season ended, but he missed four games in September and October while in concussion protocol — the second time in three seasons that the Miami quarterback has dealt with serious concussion issues. Last season's episode led to speculation that Tagovailoa might retire. He clearly wants to play, but it's also clear that he is always one bad hit away from being done.

# TEE UP YOUR DAY

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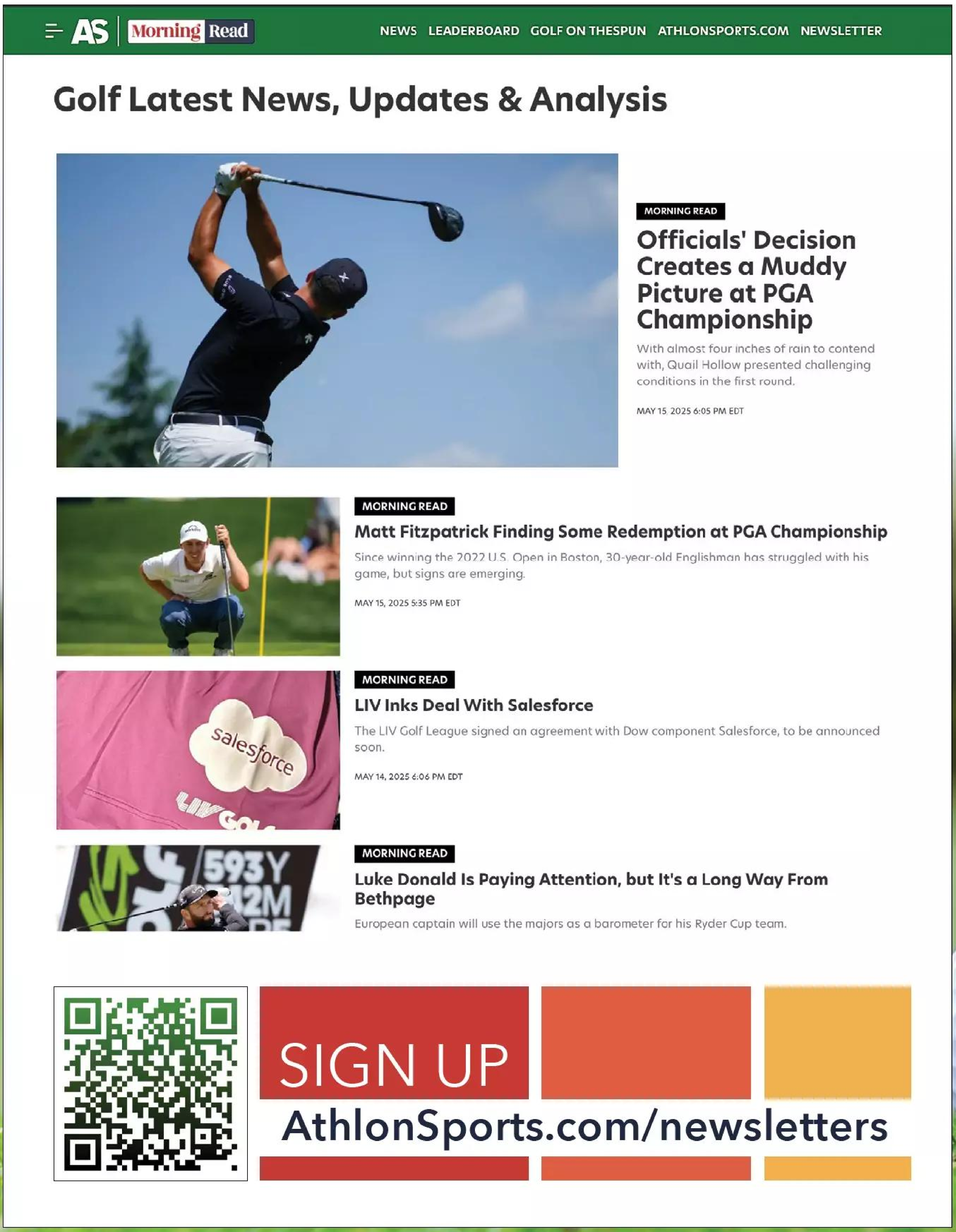
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## Golf Latest News, Updates & Analysis

MORNING READ

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MAY 15, 2025 6:05 PM EDT

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MORNING READ

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MAY 14, 2025 6:06 PM EDT

MORNING READ

**Luke Donald Is Paying Attention, but It's a Long Way From Bethpage**

European captain will use the majors as a barometer for his Ryder Cup team.

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# RB
# RANKINGS

| | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Bijan Robinson | ATL |
| ☐ | 2 | Christian McCaffrey | SF |
| ☐ | 3 | Saquon Barkley | PHI |
| ☐ | 4 | Ashton Jeanty | LV |
| ☐ | 5 | Derrick Henry | BAL |
| ☐ | 6 | Jonathan Taylor | IND |
| ☐ | 7 | Joe Mixon | HOU |
| ☐ | 8 | Jahmyr Gibbs | DET |
| ☐ | 9 | De'Von Achane | MIA |
| ☐ | 10 | Breece Hall | NYJ |
| ☐ | 11 | Kyren Williams | LAR |
| ☐ | 12 | Kenneth Walker III | SEA |
| ☐ | 13 | James Cook | BUF |
| ☐ | 14 | Chuba Hubbard | CAR |
| ☐ | 15 | James Conner | ARI |
| ☐ | 16 | Josh Jacobs | GB |
| ☐ | 17 | Alvin Kamara | NO |
| ☐ | 18 | Bucky Irving | TB |
| ☐ | 19 | Aaron Jones Sr. | MIN |
| ☐ | 20 | Chase Brown | CIN |
| ☐ | 21 | D'Andre Swift | CHI |
| ☐ | 22 | Tony Pollard | TEN |
| ☐ | 23 | David Montgomery | DET |
| ☐ | 24 | Jaylen Warren | PIT |
| ☐ | 25 | Isiah Pacheco | KC |
| ☐ | 26 | Quinshon Judkins | CLE |
| ☐ | 27 | Tyjae Spears | TEN |
| ☐ | 28 | Omarion Hampton | LAC |
| ☐ | 29 | RJ Harvey | DEN |
| ☐ | 30 | Brian Robinson Jr. | WAS |
| ☐ | 31 | TreVeyon Henderson | NE |
| ☐ | 32 | Cam Skattebo | NYG |
| ☐ | 33 | Kaleb Johnson | PIT |
| ☐ | 34 | Tyrone Tracy Jr. | NYG |
| ☐ | 35 | Najee Harris | LAC |
| ☐ | 36 | Jaydon Blue | DAL |
| ☐ | 37 | Tank Bigsby | JAC |
| ☐ | 38 | Jordan Mason | MIN |
| ☐ | 39 | Austin Ekeler | WAS |
| ☐ | 40 | Zach Charbonnet | SEA |

| | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 41 | Rachaad White | TB |
| ☐ | 42 | Trey Benson | ARI |
| ☐ | 43 | Jaleel McLaughlin | DEN |
| ☐ | 44 | Jerome Ford | CLE |
| ☐ | 45 | Javonte Williams | DAL |
| ☐ | 46 | Rhamondre Stevenson | NE |
| ☐ | 47 | Roschon Johnson | CHI |
| ☐ | 48 | Jaylen Wright | MIA |
| ☐ | 49 | J.K. Dobbins | FA |
| ☐ | 50 | Trevor Etienne | CAR |
| ☐ | 51 | Bhayshul Tuten | JAC |
| ☐ | 52 | Kendre Miller | NO |
| ☐ | 53 | MarShawn Lloyd | GB |
| ☐ | 54 | Ray Davis | BUF |
| ☐ | 55 | Travis Etienne Jr. | JAC |
| ☐ | 56 | Will Shipley | PHI |
| ☐ | 57 | Justice Hill | BAL |
| ☐ | 58 | Miles Sanders | DAL |
| ☐ | 59 | Blake Corum | LAR |
| ☐ | 60 | Tyler Allgeier | ATL |
| ☐ | 61 | Zack Moss | CIN |
| ☐ | 62 | Sean Tucker | TB |
| ☐ | 63 | Elijah Mitchell | KC |
| ☐ | 64 | Isaac Guerendo | SF |
| ☐ | 65 | Antonio Gibson | NE |
| ☐ | 66 | Ty Johnson | BUF |
| ☐ | 67 | Dylan Sampson | CLE |
| ☐ | 68 | Audric Estime | DEN |
| ☐ | 69 | Raheem Mostert | LV |
| ☐ | 70 | Braelon Allen | NYJ |
| ☐ | 71 | Samaje Perine | CIN |
| ☐ | 72 | Woody Marks | HOU |
| ☐ | 73 | Isaiah Davis | NYJ |
| ☐ | 74 | Kareem Hunt | KC |
| ☐ | 75 | Devin Singletary | NYG |
| ☐ | 76 | Rico Dowdle | CAR |
| ☐ | 77 | Alexander Mattison | MIA |
| ☐ | 78 | A.J. Dillon | PHI |
| ☐ | 79 | Keaton Mitchell | BAL |
| ☐ | 80 | Ollie Gordon II | MIA |

## WORKLOAD WATCH

| Touch/Game, 3-Yr | | TCH | TPG | GP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Derrick Henry | 1,034 | 20.7 | 50 |
| 2 | Saquon Barkley | 1,018 | 22.1 | 46 |
| 3 | Josh Jacobs | 1,000 | 21.3 | 47 |
| 4 | Najee Harris | 896 | 17.6 | 51 |
| 5 | Joe Mixon | 860 | 19.1 | 45 |
| 6 | Tony Pollard | 840 | 17.1 | 49 |
| 7 | Alvin Kamara | 831 | 19.8 | 42 |
| 8 | Travis Etienne Jr. | 769 | 15.7 | 49 |
| 9 | Aaron Jones Sr. | 750 | 16.7 | 45 |
| 10 | James Conner | 747 | 17.8 | 42 |
| 11 | Christian McCaffrey | 733 | 19.8 | 37 |
| 12 | Jonathan Taylor | 729 | 20.8 | 35 |

| Touch/Game, 2-Yr | | TCH | TPG | GP |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Saquon Barkley | 666 | 22.2 | 30 |
| 2 | Derrick Henry | 652 | 19.2 | 34 |
| 3 | Bijan Robinson | 637 | 18.7 | 34 |
| 4 | Kyren Williams | 610 | 21.8 | 28 |
| 5 | Tony Pollard | 608 | 18.4 | 33 |
| 6 | Josh Jacobs | 607 | 20.2 | 30 |
| 7 | Joe Mixon | 590 | 19.0 | 31 |
| 8 | Najee Harris | 583 | 17.1 | 34 |
| 9 | Chuba Hubbard | 570 | 17.8 | 32 |
| 10 | Breece Hall | 565 | 17.1 | 33 |
| 11 | D'Andre Swift | 563 | 17.1 | 33 |
| 12 | Alvin Kamara | 551 | 20.4 | 27 |

## INJURY CONCERNS

JOE NICHOLSON-IMAGN IMAGES

**DE'VON ACHANE, MIAMI DOLPHINS** After missing six games with knee and toe injuries as a rookie in 2023, Achane did start 16 games for Miami last season. He missed part of one game last season with a concussion; the bigger concern is the potential for injury given his lack of size (5-9, 188).

**NICK CHUBB, FREE AGENT** After his major knee injury in Week 2 of 2023, it was fully expected the Browns would bring him back very slowly in 2024. His 102 carries last season were by far the fewest he's had aside from 2023. At 29, logic says Chubb should be in good enough shape to come back strong this season, but at press time, we don't know where that will be.

**ALVIN KAMARA, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** Kamara had a nice bounce-back season in 2024, with 1,493 yards from scrimmage and eight total touchdowns. But he still missed two games with a groin injury and was slowed a bit with other injuries. And he turns 30 in July, which is always a concerning age for running backs.

**CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** For those who hoped that McCaffrey's brilliant 2023 season marked an end to his injury jinx, 2024 was a harsh reminder that he is a high-risk, high-reward fantasy player. The fact that McCaffrey suffered Achilles tendinitis in *both* feet before last season is troubling enough. The fact that he got knocked out with a knee injury shortly after returning to action adds to the concern.

**DAVID MONTGOMERY, DETROIT LIONS** Montgomery and Jahmyr Gibbs have formed quite the 1-2 punch, but Montgomery has missed some time in each of his two seasons in Detroit. He missed two games in 2023 with a rib injury and three games with a knee injury in 2024, when he finished with a career-low 775 rushing yards (though he did score 12 touchdowns).

**ISIAH PACHECO, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** After establishing himself as an unexpected starter for the Chiefs as a rookie in 2022, Pacheco missed a couple of games with a bad shoulder in 2023 and then missed 10 games last season with ankle and rib injuries.

**KENNETH WALKER III, SEATTLE SEAHAWKS** Walker is a tough runner who craves contact, but that's the problem. His style has led him to miss games in each of his three seasons (appearing in a career-low 11 games in 2024).

**JAYLEN WARREN, PITTSBURGH STEELERS** Warren has never started a game in his three seasons, but the Steelers obviously think he can hold up after letting Najee Harris sign with the Los Angeles Chargers. Still, Warren, who missed two games last season with a minor knee injury, will likely share time with third-round pick Kaleb Johnson.

# WR RANKINGS

| | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Ja'Marr Chase | CIN |
| ☐ | 2 | Puka Nacua | LAR |
| ☐ | 3 | CeeDee Lamb | DAL |
| ☐ | 4 | Malik Nabers | NYG |
| ☐ | 5 | Justin Jefferson | MIN |
| ☐ | 6 | Nico Collins | HOU |
| ☐ | 7 | A.J. Brown | PHI |
| ☐ | 8 | Drake London | ATL |
| ☐ | 9 | Brian Thomas Jr. | JAC |
| ☐ | 10 | Tee Higgins | CIN |
| ☐ | 11 | Rashee Rice | KC |
| ☐ | 12 | Jaxon Smith-Njigba | SEA |
| ☐ | 13 | Tyreek Hill | MIA |
| ☐ | 14 | Davante Adams | LAR |
| ☐ | 15 | Amon-Ra St. Brown | DET |
| ☐ | 16 | Mike Evans | TB |
| ☐ | 17 | Garrett Wilson | NYJ |
| ☐ | 18 | DJ Moore | CHI |
| ☐ | 19 | DeVonta Smith | PHI |
| ☐ | 20 | Ladd McConkey | LAC |
| ☐ | 21 | Jayden Reed | GB |
| ☐ | 22 | Chris Olave | NO |
| ☐ | 23 | Zay Flowers | BAL |
| ☐ | 24 | Terry McLaurin | WAS |
| ☐ | 25 | Jaylen Waddle | MIA |
| ☐ | 26 | Marvin Harrison Jr. | ARI |
| ☐ | 27 | Jakobi Meyers | LV |
| ☐ | 28 | Calvin Ridley | TEN |
| ☐ | 29 | Josh Downs | IND |
| ☐ | 30 | Deebo Samuel | WAS |
| ☐ | 31 | DK Metcalf | PIT |
| ☐ | 32 | Tetairoa McMillan | CAR |
| ☐ | 33 | George Pickens | DAL |
| ☐ | 34 | Jordan Addison | MIN |
| ☐ | 35 | Jameson Williams | DET |
| ☐ | 36 | Xavier Worthy | KC |
| ☐ | 37 | Cooper Kupp | SEA |
| ☐ | 38 | Courtland Sutton | DEN |
| ☐ | 39 | Khalil Shakir | BUF |
| ☐ | 40 | Jerry Jeudy | CLE |

| | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 41 | Rome Odunze | CHI |
| ☐ | 42 | Jauan Jennings | SF |
| ☐ | 43 | Chris Godwin | TB |
| ☐ | 44 | Michael Pittman Jr. | IND |
| ☐ | 45 | Darnell Mooney | ATL |
| ☐ | 46 | Rashid Shaheed | NO |
| ☐ | 47 | Brandon Aiyuk | SF |
| ☐ | 48 | Stefon Diggs | NE |
| ☐ | 49 | Christian Kirk | HOU |
| ☐ | 50 | Ricky Pearsall | SF |
| ☐ | 51 | Hollywood Brown | KC |
| ☐ | 52 | Emeka Egbuka | TB |
| ☐ | 53 | Matthew Golden | GB |
| ☐ | 54 | Travis Hunter | JAC |
| ☐ | 55 | Keon Coleman | BUF |
| ☐ | 56 | Wan'Dale Robinson | NYG |
| ☐ | 57 | Jalen Coker | CAR |
| ☐ | 58 | Ray-Ray McCloud III | ATL |
| ☐ | 59 | Quentin Johnston | LAC |
| ☐ | 60 | Allen Lazard | NYJ |
| ☐ | 61 | Amari Cooper | FA |
| ☐ | 62 | Romeo Doubs | GB |
| ☐ | 63 | Michael Wilson | ARI |
| ☐ | 64 | Cedric Tillman | CLE |
| ☐ | 65 | Tre Harris | LAC |
| ☐ | 66 | Dontayvion Wicks | GB |
| ☐ | 67 | Parker Washington | JAC |
| ☐ | 68 | Tutu Atwell | LAR |
| ☐ | 69 | Joshua Palmer | BUF |
| ☐ | 70 | Marvin Mims Jr. | DEN |
| ☐ | 71 | Darius Slayton | NYG |
| ☐ | 72 | Keenan Allen | FA |
| ☐ | 73 | Jack Bech | LV |
| ☐ | 74 | Diontae Johnson | CLE |
| ☐ | 75 | Rashod Bateman | BAL |
| ☐ | 76 | Luther Burden III | CHI |
| ☐ | 77 | Tyler Lockett | TEN |
| ☐ | 78 | Elic Ayomanor | TEN |
| ☐ | 79 | Josh Reynolds | NYJ |
| ☐ | 80 | Alec Pierce | IND |

## AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

### TOP WRs

| Player | Team | TGT | ADOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alec Pierce | IND | 66 | 22.8 |
| M. Valdes-Scantling | BUF/NO | 41 | 19.2 |
| Christian Watson | GB | 51 | 18.7 |
| Rashid Shaheed | NO | 40 | 18.1 |
| Demarcus Robinson | LAR | 69 | 16.8 |
| Calvin Ridley | TEN | 113 | 16.0 |
| Keon Coleman | BUF | 64 | 15.4 |
| Rashod Bateman | BAL | 74 | 15.2 |
| Joshua Palmer | LAC | 63 | 15.1 |
| Adonai Mitchell | IND | 51 | 14.7 |

### BOTTOM WRs

| Player | Team | TGT | ADOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Greg Dortch | ARI | 46 | 4.2 |
| Curtis Samuel | BUF | 51 | 4.6 |
| Wan'Dale Robinson | NYG | 132 | 5.1 |
| Khalil Shakir | BUF | 115 | 5.5 |
| Chris Godwin | TB | 60 | 5.6 |
| DeMario Douglas | NE | 84 | 5.9 |
| Olamide Zaccheaus | WAS | 72 | 6.1 |
| Lil'Jordan Humphrey | DEN | 43 | 6.3 |
| Josh Downs | IND | 102 | 6.7 |
| Deebo Samuel | SF | 80 | 6.9 |

For wide receivers and tight ends, ADOT removes volatile YAC (yards after catch) from the equation, instead focusing only on the average distance the player is downfield on each target. It's an indicator of big-play potential.

(Min. 40 targets, including playoffs) • Source: Pro Football Focus

## INJURY CONCERNS

**BRANDON AIYUK, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** After two highly productive seasons that earned him a big payday, Aiyuk's 2024 campaign ended after he suffered an ACL/MCL injury that required surgery. The fact that the 49ers traded away Deebo Samuel and didn't make any drastic moves in the draft implies they expect Aiyuk to be ready to contribute this season.

**HOLLYWOOD BROWN, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** After a serious preseason injury, Brown finally made his debut in Week 16. He posted pedestrian stats in the five games (including playoffs) that he played, but he's healthy. It should be noted that in Brown's first five NFL seasons, with the Baltimore Ravens and Arizona Cardinals, he's never started every game of a season.

**TANK DELL, HOUSTON TEXANS** When you think of small receivers who are injury-prone, Dell is the poster child for this syndrome. After missing six games as a rookie in 2023, he suffered a serious knee injury late last season. It's unlikely he'll be 100% for a while.

**STEFON DIGGS, NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS** A torn ACL in Week 8 ended his first season with the Houston Texans. After he posted videos chronicling his offseason rehab progress, the Pats signed him as a free agent. Diggs should be ready for the start of the season, but at 31, wear and tear could be a factor.

**ZAY FLOWERS, BALTIMORE RAVENS** Flowers has played in 33 of 34 regular-season games since joining the league, but he was inactive for Baltimore's two playoff games last season with a knee injury. He was expected back had the Ravens advanced, but a 5-foot-9, 175-pound receiver is always an injury concern.

**XAVIER LEGETTE, CAROLINA PANTHERS** Legette was bothered by a nagging foot injury that required surgery after the season. He is expected to be full-go in training camp, but his role is due to change after the team drafted receiver Tetairoa McMillan No. 8 overall.

**CHRIS OLAVE, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS** Olave took a major step back in 2024. That was due in part to a concussion that kept him out for three games (he played only eight total). That was his third concussion in three seasons, so it clearly could happen again.

**MICHAEL PITTMAN JR., INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** Credit Pittman for playing through the pain of a fractured back all of last season. But a bad back is a bad back. It didn't require any surgery, and he's had all offseason to rest. But backs are tricky.

**RASHEE RICE, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** Rice was averaging six catches for 72 yards through four games before suffering a season-ending knee injury. He shouldn't have trouble getting back to full speed (although he may be facing a suspension).

**CHRISTIAN WATSON, GREEN BAY PACKERS** Watson averaged 21.4 yards per catch in limited action last season, but he suffered an ACL injury in Week 18. Since speed is the name of his game, there's little chance he'll be ready for Week 1. Green Bay drafted another speedster, Matthew Golden, in the first round.

# TE RANKINGS

| | Rk | Player | Team |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Trey McBride | ARI |
| ☐ | 2 | Brock Bowers | LV |
| ☐ | 3 | Sam LaPorta | DET |
| ☐ | 4 | David Njoku | CLE |
| ☐ | 5 | George Kittle | SF |
| ☐ | 6 | Travis Kelce | KC |
| ☐ | 7 | T.J. Hockenson | MIN |
| ☐ | 8 | Dalton Kincaid | BUF |
| ☐ | 9 | Jonnu Smith | MIA |
| ☐ | 10 | Mark Andrews | BAL |
| ☐ | 11 | Hunter Henry | NE |
| ☐ | 12 | Jake Ferguson | DAL |
| ☐ | 13 | Evan Engram | DEN |
| ☐ | 14 | Pat Freiermuth | PIT |
| ☐ | 15 | Kyle Pitts | ATL |
| ☐ | 16 | Tyler Warren | IND |
| ☐ | 17 | Zach Ertz | WAS |
| ☐ | 18 | Tucker Kraft | GB |
| ☐ | 19 | Chig Okonkwo | TEN |
| ☐ | 20 | Dallas Goedert | PHI |
| ☐ | 21 | Juwan Johnson | NO |
| ☐ | 22 | Dalton Schultz | HOU |
| ☐ | 23 | Mike Gesicki | CIN |
| ☐ | 24 | Tyler Higbee | LAR |
| ☐ | 25 | Ja'Tavion Sanders | CAR |
| ☐ | 26 | Isaiah Likely | BAL |
| ☐ | 27 | Cade Otton | TB |
| ☐ | 28 | Theo Johnson | NYG |
| ☐ | 29 | Colston Loveland | CHI |
| ☐ | 30 | Will Dissly | LAC |
| ☐ | 31 | Michael Mayer | LV |
| ☐ | 32 | Noah Gray | KC |
| ☐ | 33 | Brenton Strange | JAC |
| ☐ | 34 | Mason Taylor | NYJ |
| ☐ | 35 | Harold Fannin Jr. | CLE |
| ☐ | 36 | Noah Fant | SEA |
| ☐ | 37 | Ben Sinnott | WAS |
| ☐ | 38 | Elijah Arroyo | SEA |
| ☐ | 39 | Luke Musgrave | GB |
| ☐ | 40 | Terrance Ferguson | LAR |

TREY McBRIDE

## AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

| Player | Team | TGT | ADOT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mark Andrews | BAL | 79 | 10.5 |
| Foster Moreau | NO | 42 | 10.3 |
| Isaiah Likely | BAL | 65 | 9.5 |
| T.J. Hockenson | MIN | 64 | 9.0 |
| Dalton Kincaid | BUF | 81 | 8.9 |
| George Kittle | SF | 92 | 8.9 |
| Kyle Pitts | ATL | 70 | 8.7 |
| Dalton Schultz | HOU | 92 | 8.3 |
| Juwan Johnson | NO | 64 | 8.2 |
| Hunter Henry | NE | 89 | 7.9 |
| Mike Gesicki | CIN | 82 | 7.8 |
| Zach Ertz | WAS | 111 | 7.8 |
| Sam LaPorta | DET | 85 | 7.6 |
| Brenton Strange | JAC | 54 | 7.4 |
| Cole Kmet | CHI | 55 | 7.1 |
| Travis Kelce | KC | 149 | 7.1 |
| Theo Johnson | NYG | 43 | 6.9 |
| Austin Hooper | NE | 59 | 6.9 |
| Dallas Goedert | PHI | 71 | 6.7 |
| Noah Gray | KC | 52 | 6.6 |
| Brock Bowers | LV | 148 | 6.6 |
| Trey McBride | ARI | 139 | 6.5 |
| Ja'Tavion Sanders | CAR | 43 | 6.3 |
| Jordan Akins | CLE | 54 | 6.3 |
| Colby Parkinson | LAR | 51 | 6.2 |
| Pat Freiermuth | PIT | 78 | 6.2 |
| Noah Fant | SEA | 62 | 5.9 |

(MIN 30 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

For wide receivers and tight ends, ADOT removes volatile YAC (yards after catch) from the equation, instead focusing only on the average distance the player is downfield on each target. It's an indicator of big-play potential.

## INJURY CONCERNS

**JAKE FERGUSON, DALLAS COWBOYS** Ferguson emerged as a valuable weapon for the Cowboys in 2023, but he took a step back last season, and injuries played a part. Ferguson has also missed time in two of his three NFL seasons with concussions, so that's an ongoing risk.

**DALLAS GOEDERT, PHILADELPHIA EAGLES** Goedert has been a key weapon in the Eagles' high-powered offense, but he had trouble staying on the field last season. He's missed 15 games in the last three seasons, including seven games last season with foot and hamstring injuries. His 2024 numbers — 42 receptions for 496 yards and two touchdowns — were all the lowest totals for Goedert since his 2018 rookie season.

**TYLER HIGBEE, LOS ANGELES RAMS** The 32-year-old Higbee missed most of the 2024 season recovering from knee surgery. Even after returning for the final three games of the season, he missed some time with a chest injury. His value is evident, as he caught a touchdown pass in the Rams' close loss to the Philadelphia Eagles in the divisional playoff game, but the Rams did draft fellow tight end Terrance Ferguson in the second round.

**THEO JOHNSON, NEW YORK GIANTS** Johnson was an unknown quantity when he joined the Giants as a fourth-round rookie last season, but the sudden retirement of Darren Waller and an injury to Daniel Bellinger pressed him into duty. Johnson progressed slowly and then missed the last five games of the season with a Lisfranc injury. He finished the season with 29 catches for 331 yards and one score.

**GEORGE KITTLE, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** Kittle is one of the most productive tight ends in the NFL, but he turns 32 in October. He didn't miss any games en route to catching 78 passes for 1,106 yards and eight touchdowns last season, but he was banged up — he was listed as questionable or doubtful for five weeks with hamstring, rib, foot and ankle injuries.

**LUKE MUSGRAVE, GREEN BAY PACKERS** Even after missing a few games during his rookie season in 2023 with a kidney injury, Musgrave was the starting tight end for Green Bay when the 2024 season began. But he actually lost his job to Tucker Kraft before suffering an ankle injury in Week 5. The injury persisted, and he'll have to overcome his track record of missing games if he has any chance of taking playing time back from Kraft.

**DAVID NJOKU, CLEVELAND BROWNS** With so much uncertainty at the quarterback spot for Cleveland, Njoku will be relied on heavily, whether that's providing a target for veteran Joe Flacco or one of the two rookies they drafted. Njoku can be more than a safety valve, but he needs to stay healthy. In 2024, Njoku missed three games with an ankle injury and three others due to a knee.

KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES

# D/ST RANKINGS

## ↑ GOING UP ↑

KEVIN JAIRAJ-IMAGN IMAGES

**DETROIT LIONS** The Lions' defense was decimated by a rash of injuries in 2024, though none hurt more than defensive end **Aidan Hutchinson** going down after racking up 7.5 sacks in just five games. A return to health will go a long way for this unit, which allowed the third-most passing yards per game a season ago. The departure of defensive coordinator Aaron Glenn hurts, but Detroit upgraded its secondary by signing cornerback D.J. Reed, and drafting defensive tackle Tyleik Williams reinforces the front seven. Expect more sacks and an improved pass defense.

**LOS ANGELES RAMS** In their first year in a decade without Aaron Donald, the Rams took a step forward on defense. Drafting Defensive Rookie of the Year Jared Verse and his college teammate Braden Fiske certainly had something to do with that improvement. Los Angeles' young defense should keep ascending with coordinator Chris Shula staying put. The Rams addressed their suspect run defense by signing Poona Ford and drafting Ty Hamilton, both defensive tackles. Rookie linebackers Josaiah Stewart and Chris Paul Jr. also add depth to an ascending pass rush.

**INDIANAPOLIS COLTS** Only three teams allowed more yards per game last year than the Colts, who remade the back end of their defense in the offseason. Indianapolis parted ways with Gus Bradley and brought in former Bengals coordinator Lou Anarumo, and the Colts made a marquee free-agent signing in cornerback Charvarius Ward. They didn't stop there, signing safety Cam Bynum and spending their third-round pick on cornerback Justin Walley. To add to an aging defensive line, Indy drafted defensive end JT Tuimoloau. New leadership and personnel should turn the tide.

## 2025 RANKINGS

| | RK | TEAM |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ | 1 | Buffalo |
| ☐ | 2 | Baltimore |
| ☐ | 3 | Houston |
| ☐ | 4 | Dallas |
| ☐ | 5 | Green Bay |
| ☐ | 6 | New York Jets |
| ☐ | 7 | Denver |
| ☐ | 8 | Kansas City |
| ☐ | 9 | Pittsburgh |
| ☐ | 10 | Minnesota |
| ☐ | 11 | Cleveland |
| ☐ | 12 | Philadelphia |
| ☐ | 13 | Detroit |
| ☐ | 14 | Seattle |
| ☐ | 15 | Indianapolis |
| ☐ | 16 | New England |
| ☐ | 17 | San Francisco |
| ☐ | 18 | L.A. Rams |
| ☐ | 19 | New York Giants |
| ☐ | 20 | Tampa Bay |
| ☐ | 21 | Washington |
| ☐ | 22 | Chicago |
| ☐ | 23 | Jacksonville |
| ☐ | 24 | L.A. Chargers |
| ☐ | 25 | Miami |
| ☐ | 26 | Carolina |
| ☐ | 27 | Las Vegas |
| ☐ | 28 | Arizona |
| ☐ | 29 | Atlanta |
| ☐ | 30 | New Orleans |
| ☐ | 31 | Tennessee |
| ☐ | 32 | Cincinnati |

## ↓ GOING DOWN ↓

**KANSAS CITY CHIEFS** The Chiefs still have the best defensive coordinator in the league in Steve Spagnuolo. However, their personnel isn't what it once was. Kansas City's sack numbers fell off as Chris Jones recorded his fewest sacks since his rookie year in 2016. And after giving up 40 points in the Super Bowl, the Chiefs didn't throw a ton of resources at the defense in the offseason. Bringing back linebacker Nick Bolton and drafting front seven depth is good business, but KC's DST might not be the commodity it has been in recent years.

**SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS** Beyond Nick Bosa and Fred Warner, the 49ers saw a mass exodus on defense. Edge rusher Leonard Floyd, linebacker Drew Greenlaw, defensive tackle Javon Hargrave, cornerback Charvarius Ward and safety Talanoa Hufanga moved on from a team that finished in the bottom five in points allowed. Accordingly, San Francisco fired coordinator Nick Sorensen and reunited with Robert Saleh. The former Jets head coach should be able to get the most out of a unit that added to its front in the draft, but the roster reshuffling on that side of the ball does not inspire confidence.

**MIAMI DOLPHINS** The Dolphins finished in the top 10 in points allowed and top five in yards allowed in coordinator Anthony Weaver's first season in charge and still finished as a bottom-tier D/ST. Losing safety Jevon Holland, cornerback Kendall Fuller and, in all likelihood, cornerback Jalen Ramsey does not help Miami's defensive outlook. The Dolphins are also counting on pass-rushers Bradley Chubb and Jaelan Phillips to return to peak form after ACL injuries. Miami's draft, specifically its selection of defensive tackle Kenneth Grant, aimed to address the defensive line, but the secondary is a glaring concern.

# 2025 NFL SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1

**Thursday, September 4**
Dallas at Philadelphia

**Friday, September 5**
Kansas City vs. L.A. Chargers (São Paulo)

**Sunday, September 7**
Tampa Bay at Atlanta
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Miami at Indianapolis
Las Vegas at New England
Arizona at New Orleans
Pittsburgh at N.Y. Jets
N.Y. Giants at Washington
Carolina at Jacksonville
Tennessee at Denver
San Francisco at Seattle
Detroit at Green Bay
Houston at L.A. Rams
Baltimore at Buffalo

**Monday, September 8**
Minnesota at Chicago

## WEEK 2

**Thursday, September 11**
Washington at Green Bay

**Sunday, September 14**
Jacksonville at Cincinnati
N.Y. Giants at Dallas
Chicago at Detroit
L.A. Rams at Tennessee
New England at Miami
San Francisco at New Orleans
Buffalo at N.Y. Jets
Seattle at Pittsburgh
Cleveland at Baltimore
Denver at Indianapolis
Carolina at Arizona
Philadelphia at Kansas City
Atlanta at Minnesota

**Monday, September 15**
Tampa Bay at Houston
L.A. Chargers at Las Vegas

## WEEK 3

**Thursday, September 18**
Miami at Buffalo

**Sunday, September 21**
Green Bay at Cleveland
Indianapolis at Tennessee
Cincinnati at Minnesota
Pittsburgh at New England
L.A. Rams at Philadelphia
N.Y. Jets at Tampa Bay
Las Vegas at Washington
Atlanta at Carolina
Houston at Jacksonville
Denver at L.A. Chargers
New Orleans at Seattle
Dallas at Chicago
Arizona at San Francisco
Kansas City at N.Y. Giants

**Monday, September 22**
Detroit at Baltimore

## WEEK 4

**Thursday, September 25**
Seattle at Arizona

**Sunday, October 28**
Minnesota vs. Pittsburgh (Dublin)
Washington at Atlanta
New Orleans at Buffalo
Cleveland at Detroit
Carolina at New England
L.A. Chargers at N.Y. Giants
Philadelphia at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at Houston
Indianapolis at L.A. Rams
Jacksonville at San Francisco
Baltimore at Kansas City
Chicago at Las Vegas
Green Bay at Dallas

**Monday, September 29**
N.Y. Jets at Miami
Cincinnati at Denver

## WEEK 5

**Thursday, October 2**
San Francisco at L.A. Rams

**Sunday, October 5**
Minnesota vs. Cleveland (London)
Las Vegas at Indianapolis
N.Y. Giants at New Orleans
Dallas at N.Y. Jets
Denver at Philadelphia
Miami at Carolina
Houston at Baltimore
Tennessee at Arizona
Tampa Bay at Seattle
Detroit at Cincinnati
Washington at L.A. Chargers
New England at Buffalo

**Monday, October 6**
Kansas City at Jacksonville

**Bye:** Atlanta, Chicago, Green Bay, Pittsburgh

## WEEK 6

**Thursday, October 9**
Philadelphia at N.Y. Giants

**Sunday, October 12**
Denver vs. N.Y. Jets (London)
Arizona at Indianapolis
L.A. Chargers at Miami
Cleveland at Pittsburgh
San Francisco at Tampa Bay
Dallas at Carolina
Seattle at Jacksonville
L.A. Rams at Baltimore
Tennessee at Las Vegas
Cincinnati at Green Bay
New England at New Orleans
Detroit at Kansas City

**Monday, October 13**
Buffalo at Atlanta
Chicago at Washington

**Bye:** Houston, Minnesota

## WEEK 7

**Thursday, October 16**
Pittsburgh at Cincinnati

**Sunday, October 19**
L.A. Rams vs. Jacksonville (London)
New Orleans at Chicago
Miami at Cleveland
New England at Tennessee
Las Vegas at Kansas City
Philadelphia at Minnesota
Carolina at N.Y. Jets
N.Y. Giants at Denver
Indianapolis at L.A Chargers
Washington at Dallas
Green Bay at Arizona
Atlanta at San Francisco

**Monday, October 20**
Tampa Bay at Detroit
Houston at Seattle

**Bye:** Baltimore, Buffalo

## WEEK 8

**Thursday, October 23**
Minnesota at L.A. Chargers

**Sunday, October 26**
Miami at Atlanta
N.Y. Jets at Cincinnati
Cleveland at New England
N.Y. Giants at Philadelphia
Buffalo at Carolina
Chicago at Baltimore
San Francisco at Houston
Tampa Bay at New Orleans
Dallas at Denver
Tennessee at Indianapolis
Green Bay at Pittsburgh

**Monday, October 27**
Washington at Kansas City

**Bye:** Arizona, Detroit, Jacksonville, Las Vegas, L.A. Rams, Seattle

## WEEK 9

**Thursday, October 30**
Baltimore at Miami

**Sunday, November 2**
Chicago at Cincinnati
Minnesota at Detroit
Carolina at Green Bay
L.A. Chargers at Tennessee
Atlanta at New England
San Francisco at N.Y. Giants
Indianapolis at Pittsburgh
Denver at Houston
Jacksonville at Las Vegas
New Orleans at L.A. Rams
Kansas City at Buffalo
Seattle at Washington

**Monday, November 3**
Arizona at Dallas

**Bye:** Cleveland, N.Y. Jets, Philadelphia, Tampa Bay

## WEEK 10

**Thursday, November 6**
Las Vegas at Denver

**Sunday, November 9**
Atlanta vs. Indianapolis (Berlin)
N.Y. Giants at Chicago
Buffalo at Miami
Baltimore at Minnesota
Cleveland at N.Y. Jets
New England at Tampa Bay
New Orleans at Carolina
Jacksonville at Houston
Arizona at Seattle
L.A. Rams at San Francisco
Detroit at Washington
Pittsburgh at L.A. Chargers

**Monday, November 10**
Philadelphia at Green Bay

**Bye:** Cincinnati, Dallas, Kansas City, Tennessee

## WEEK 11

**Thursday, November 13**
N.Y. Jets at New England

**Sunday, November 16**
Washington vs. Miami (Madrid)
Carolina at Atlanta
Tampa Bay at Buffalo
Houston at Tennessee
Chicago at Minnesota
Green Bay at N.Y. Giants
Cincinnati at Pittsburgh
L.A. Chargers at Jacksonville
Seattle at L.A. Rams
San Francisco at Arizona
Baltimore at Cleveland
Kansas City at Denver
Detroit at Philadelphia

**Monday, November 17**
Dallas at Las Vegas

**Bye:** Indianapolis, New Orleans

## WEEK 12

**Thursday, November 20**
Buffalo at Houston

**Sunday, November 23**
Pittsburgh at Chicago
New England at Cincinnati
N.Y. Giants at Detroit
Minnesota at Green Bay
Seattle at Tennessee
Indianapolis at Kansas City
N.Y. Jets at Baltimore
Cleveland at Las Vegas
Jacksonville at Arizona
Philadelphia at Dallas
Atlanta at New Orleans
Tampa Bay at L.A. Rams

**Monday, November 24**
Carolina at San Francisco

**Bye:** Denver, L.A. Chargers, Miami, Washington

## WEEK 13

**Thursday, November 27**
Green Bay at Detroit
Kansas City at Dallas
Cincinnati at Baltimore

**Friday, November 28**
Chicago at Philadelphia

**Sunday, November 30**
San Francisco at Cleveland
Jacksonville at Tennessee
Houston at Indianapolis
New Orleans at Miami
Atlanta at N.Y. Jets
Arizona at Tampa Bay
L.A. Rams at Carolina
Minnesota at Seattle
Buffalo at Pittsburgh
Las Vegas at L.A. Chargers
Denver at Washington

**Monday, December 1**
N.Y. Giants at New England

## WEEK 14

**Thursday, December 4**
Dallas at Detroit

**Sunday, December 7**
Seattle at Atlanta
Tennessee at Cleveland
Chicago at Green Bay
Washington at Minnesota
Miami at N.Y. Jets
New Orleans at Tampa Bay
Indianapolis at Jacksonville
Pittsburgh at Baltimore
Denver at Las Vegas
Cincinnati at Buffalo
L.A. Rams at Arizona
Houston at Kansas City

**Monday, December 8**
Philadelphia at L.A. Chargers

**Bye:** Carolina, New England, N.Y. Giants, San Francisco

## WEEK 15

**Thursday, December 11**
Atlanta at Tampa Bay

**Sunday, December 14**
Cleveland at Chicago
Baltimore at Cincinnati
L.A. Chargers at Kansas City
Buffalo at New England
Washington at N.Y. Giants
Las Vegas at Philadelphia
N.Y. Jets at Jacksonville
Arizona at Houston
Green Bay at Denver
Detroit at L.A. Rams
Carolina at New Orleans
Tennessee at San Francisco
Indianapolis at Seattle
Minnesota at Dallas

**Monday, December 15**
Miami at Pittsburgh

## WEEK 16

**Thursday, December 18**
L.A. Rams at Seattle

**Saturday, December 20**
Green Bay at Chicago
Philadelphia at Washington

**Sunday, December 21**
Buffalo at Cleveland
L.A. Chargers at Dallas
Kansas City at Tennessee
N.Y. Jets at New Orleans
Minnesota at N.Y. Giants
Tampa Bay at Carolina
New England at Baltimore
Jacksonville at Denver
Atlanta at Arizona
Pittsburgh at Detroit
Las Vegas at Houston
Cincinnati at Miami

**Monday, December 22**
San Francisco at Indianapolis

## WEEK 17

**Thursday, December 25**
Dallas at Washington
Detroit at Minnesota
Denver at Kansas City

**Sunday, December 28**
Pittsburgh at Cleveland
New Orleans at Tennessee
Jacksonville at Indianapolis
Tampa Bay at Miami
New England at N.Y. Jets
Philadelphia at Buffalo
Chicago at San Francisco

**Monday, December 29**
L.A. Rams at Atlanta

**Flex Games - Date/Time TBA**
Arizona at Cincinnati
Baltimore at Green Bay
N.Y. Giants at Las Vegas
Houston at L.A. Chargers
Seattle at Carolina

## WEEK 18

**Flex Games - Date/Time TBA**
New Orleans at Atlanta
N.Y. Jets at Buffalo
Detroit at Chicago
Cleveland at Cincinnati
L.A. Chargers at Denver
Kansas City at Las Vegas
Arizona at L.A. Rams
Green Bay at Minnesota
Miami at New England
Dallas at N.Y. Giants
Washington at Philadelphia
Baltimore at Pittsburgh
Seattle at San Francisco
Carolina at Tampa Bay
Tennessee at Jacksonville
Indianapolis at Houston

## NFL POSTSEASON

**Super Wild Card Weekend**
Saturday, January 10, 2026
Sunday, January 11, 2026
Monday, January 12, 2026

**Divisional Playoffs**
Saturday, January 17, 2026
Sunday, January 18, 2026

**AFC and NFC Championship**
Sunday, January 25, 2026

**Super Bowl LX**
Sunday, February 8, 2026 • Levi's Stadium, Santa Clara, Calif. (NBC)

## THE BACK PAGE

# MONSTERS OF THE MIDWAY

It's the 40th anniversary of the NFL's greatest defense (and possibly its greatest team) — the '85 Bears

**BY CRAIG ELLENPORT**

BEARS
REMBERT
52

DICK RAPHAEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

How cocky (and confident) were the 1985 Chicago Bears? Not only did they record their infamous "Super Bowl Shuffle" music video a whole month before the playoffs even began, but they also did it one day after suffering their first loss of the season in front of a massive national audience.

Never mind that the Miami Dolphins put an end to Chicago's bid for an unbeaten season. So what if the Bears couldn't match the perfection of the 1972 Dolphins? After all is said and done, it's quite possible that the team the Chicago Bears put on the gridiron 40 years ago is the best the NFL has ever seen.

The '85 Bears can certainly lay claim to being the most dominant team in league history. They had a defense that led the NFL in fewest points allowed, fewest yards allowed and most takeaways. They finished the season with a 15-1 record, pitched back-to-back shutouts in the NFC playoffs and then demolished the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XX — a 46-10 beatdown that wasn't even that close.

By the time the Bears got to that Monday night road game against the Dolphins in Week 13, the football world knew what they had:

- Mike Ditka was in his fourth season as the team's hard-boiled head coach. A Chicago legend, Ditka was a key player for the Bears' last NFL championship in 1963.
- The offense featured the NFL's all-time leading rusher in Walter Payton, who broke Jim Brown's record in 1984. The man they called Sweetness was 32 when the 1985 season began, but he wasn't slowing down. Payton rushed for 1,551 yards, his third straight season with at least 1,400 yards.
- And about that defense … Led by legendary coordinator Buddy Ryan, the famed "46 defense" featured four future Hall of Famers: linebacker Mike Singletary and defensive linemen Dan Hampton, Richard Dent and Steve McMichael. They allowed 12.4 points per game, a record at the time for a 16-game season. They held 11 opponents to 10 points or fewer — including a three-game stretch in Weeks 10-12 in which they outscored opponents by a combined score of 104-3.

Then there were the larger-than-life personalities. The entire team had adopted Ditka's Chicago tough-guy image. The defense, loaded with stars, pledged their allegiance to Ryan and his attacking style. The quarterback was Jim McMahon — a.k.a. the Punky QB — who made more headlines in 1985 for clashing with then-commissioner Pete Rozelle over wearing unauthorized headbands on the field than he did for his play. The team featured NFL royalty in the classy and beloved Payton. It also boasted the NFL's best comic relief in 335-pound rookie defensive tackle William "The Refrigerator" Perry.

Perry eventually cracked the starting lineup and was a key contributor on defense, but he became a fan favorite when Ditka used him as a fullback, blocking and occasionally running the ball in short-yardage situations. Perry had two rushing touchdowns during the regular season and another in Super Bowl XX.

The biggest mystery about the 1985 Bears: If they were so good — and they were — then why didn't they win more than one Super Bowl?

For a team that has been mythologized over the years, you could blame its one-hit-wonder status on a curse: The Curse of Refrigerator Perry.

The general public was amused when Ditka let the Fridge score that cherry-on-top touchdown late in Super Bowl XX. Bears fans, however, were not. They were downright sour that Ditka didn't let Sweetness, the great Payton, have his Super Bowl moment.

Perhaps Ditka was sure the Bears would get back to the big game and Payton would get his touchdown.

And perhaps that's the reason the Bears haven't won a Super Bowl in 40 years.

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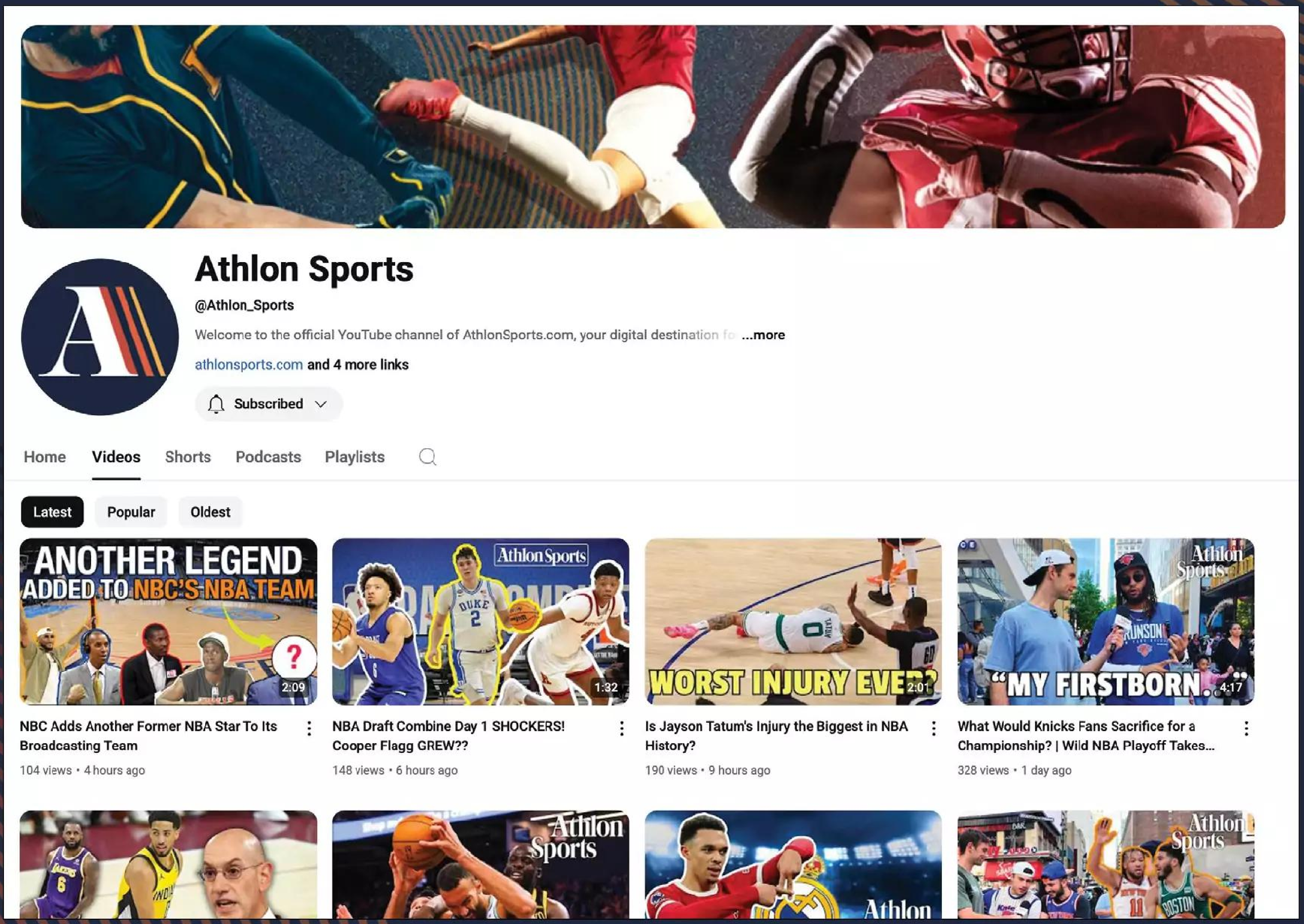

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